ハイスクールD×D

夏期講習のユグドラシル

25

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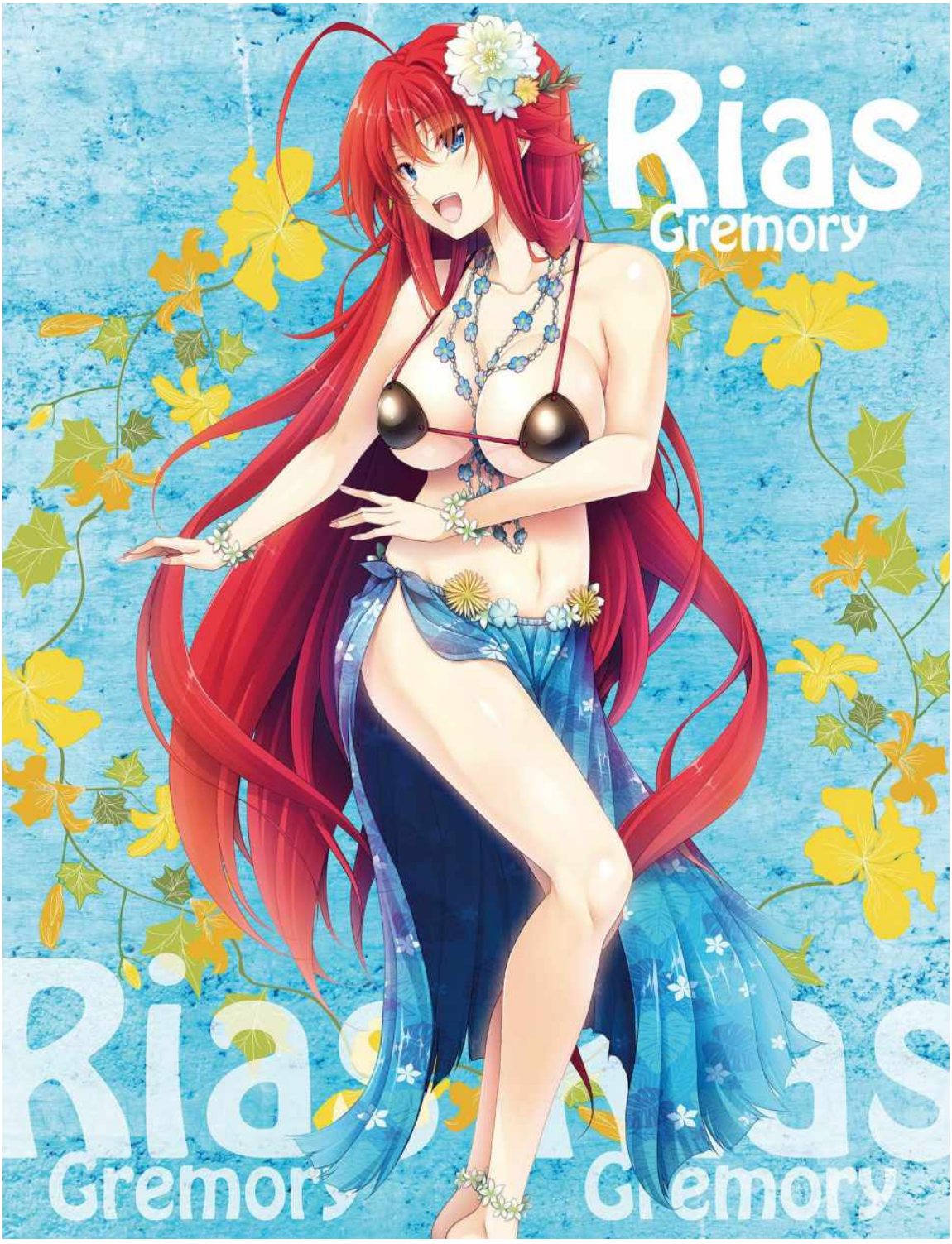
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Transcendental reason

One day—.

Amidst the Rating Game World Tournament in which all factions were participating, a secret meeting took place on the rooftop of a certain building in the human world. In the rooftop garden, a table and chair were placed in the centre. The man who was sitting in the chair — the Maou Ajuka Beelzebub greeted the young man who silently appeared from the shadows of darkness, Ikuse Tobio. As Ajuka closed the book that he was reading, he began to speak to that man — Slash Dog.

“Sorry, Ikuse Tobio-kun. Even though we’re in the midst of the Tournament, I’m still getting you to move behind the scenes.”

“No, it’s quite alright. I don’t dislike working in concealment.”

“So, does that mean you’ve been able to confirm something regarding that matter?”

Ikuse Tobio laid out several photographs onto the table. Depicted in these photos were a man and a woman walking along a less-travelled road. Judging only by appearances, the pair seemed as though they were the age of high school students. Ikuse Tobio pointed to the young man who was shown in the photos.

“It wouldn’t even be possible to capture his shadow by conventional means, but by using a filter that the Grigori specially made, I was finally able to capture his appearance. That man is…Kanzaki Mitsuya.”

In response to this report, Ajuka narrowed his eyes.

“…Ah, just as I thought. …[Innovate Clear] and [Telos Karma]’s…”

Ajuka placed his hand on his chin and sank into thought for a while. Rather abruptly, he asked Ikuse Tobio

“…What do you think? I want to know what your frank opinion is, given that you’re someone who has seen the other side of every faction.”

“There is no doubt that they have responded to the suspicious movements of the leaders of hell that the god Hades began.”

Just as he said, including Hades, the leaders who governed hell within each faction had all begun to act suspiciously. Although every faction was ostensibly enthusiastic

about the Tournament, they were also paying close attention to the movements that Hades and the others were making in the background. And at the same time, the Longinus which was beyond the common sense of this world had also begun to move. There were rumours that Hades and the other leaders of hell had formed a secret alliance, and had marked the VIPs and Longinus possessors of each faction as their targets. These rumours began to grow closer to the truth with each passing day. There was no doubt that the mysterious Devils who assaulted every faction were also connected to Hades and the leaders of hell. That was where [Innovate Clear] and [Telos Karma] began to take action. Ikuse Tobio said

“The thing that concerns me the most is contact between them and the Two Heavenly Dragons of this generation, who will have a tremendous influence on the future of the supernatural world. In particular, if the possessor of [Telos Karma] encounters Hyoudou Issei-kun…I can’t even begin to imagine what might happen.”

“…Indeed. I can’t imagine that either. Hyoudou Issei-kun’s existence is considered to be like a miracle to many people. If he suddenly encounters [First Dark], who falls outside the bounds of logic, and whose very existence has been erased, then…. Exactly what kind of phenomenon will that cause?”

However, Ajuka also thought about this. It was the wish of Former Governor Azazel to bring all of the Longinus possessors over to this side before they made contact with [ExE]. And so, if that was the case, then he intentionally—.

Life.0

It happened just a while after the match between Rias' team and Vali's team---.

"A bath, a bath."

"A bath, a bath."

"A bath, a bath ♪."

I was washing my body down in the large bath at the Hyoudou residence, along with Ophis, Lilith and Kunou. When I decided to take a bath, Ophis, Lilith and Kunou came along, and we all went in together. The four of us were now side by side. These three girls occasionally accompany me in the bath. I always tell them to wash their bodies properly, and not to play around in the bath. Well, I wonder if this is what it feels like to be an older brother.

Splash! After rinsing Ophis's back while she sat in the front of me, we decided to soak in the bathtub together.

"Ise, carry me on your back."

"Carry me on your back."

"Bring me along too ♪"

There are three people hanging off my back! Even though the girls are small, as might be expected, all three of them together are still heavy! But after being carried into the bathtub, they finally let go.

"Ui—"

Ahhh, bathing after training really is effective. It's as if I am in heaven. Looking at them, the three girls next to me seem like they are also comfortably enjoying the warm bath. The first time Kunou entered the bath together with me, she was so embarrassed, but---

"Thinking about the future, this is just a trivial matter!" said Kunou.

---And, before I realised, Kunou bathing together with me had already become something normal.

Kunou then suddenly said

“Ah, I want my breasts to quickly become as big as okaa-sama's.”

While placing her hands over her breasts, Kunou said so. Her breasts are still too flat that they can't be called ‘oppai’ compared to the well-developed oppai of her okaa-sama, Yasaka-san. Aaaaaah!!!!!, I want to massage those oppai to my heart’s content, even only once would be okay!

As if reading my mind, Kunou stood up from the bathtub energetically while saying

“If they become as big as okaa-sama's, I will allow you to have a good look at my breasts. You better be ready at that time!”

I then replied with a mischievous face

“Unexpectedly, they’re still pretty small, huh.”

Kunou then pouted.

“They will become bigger, surely! ”

Kunou then abruptly jumped towards me! Guwa! She covered my face with her body!

“Me too, me too”

“O~”

Ophis and Lilith mimicked Kunou and pounced onto me.

Before the match with the [Leisure of the Kings] Team, which was approaching soon, I spent my peaceful moments with these loli girls.

Playing with Kunou was good and all, but the bitter part about being the Sekiryuutei was that the day wouldn’t merely end like that. We, the Hyoudou Issei Team, gathered in my room and talked about the next match. And amidst that, what we were paying attention to was---

<<Oh! The match has been decided! Following the sudden return of the Champion Diehauser Belial, he has once again earned a victory!>>

The status of the tournament was displayed on the TV screen. There, the splendid sight of the Rating Game Champion who returned to the tournament was shown. Diehauser Belial had clenched yet another victory.

Xenovia groaned.

“As expected of Rating Game Champion. Even though he only started participating from the middle of the tournament, it’s only a matter of time before he qualifies for the main draw of the tournament.”

It was exactly as Xenovia said. Even though he joined part-way through the tournament, he smoothl-, no, he naturally keeps gaining stars, and his evaluation is already in the top ranks as well.

“He is also winning against God-class beings, right? Needless to say, the Champion really is amazing.” added Irina.

Emperor Belial even defeated teams belonging to God-class beings with his superior

tactics and great knowledge of the Rating Game's rules. Well, since Diehauser's true strength alone is undoubted, even if God-class beings were to get close, he could deal with them properly. As expected, Diehauser's specialty, [Worthless] is strong….inviolable even. If the enemy was an unskillful God-class being, their power would be crushed by [Worthless]. And because of that, Team Belial, who showed the nature of the Champion are certainly expected to go into the main tournament.

With something like that, and because the tournament is also progressing to the finale, us members of the Hyoudou Issei Team are paying attention to the teams that are going into the main draw, as well as players who stirred up a big fuss in the tournament. Even on television, there is this special program called "New Faces Noticed in the Tournament", which highlights players in the tournament who stood out. Rookies that are being looked forward to are shown one after another. And among them were the mysterious Devils Who suddenly appeared in the tournament like a meteor yesterday.

---The copper-haired Balberith and the jade-haired Verrine.

<<Even though they didn't really stand out, this team is not most certainly unusual. They suddenly participated in this tournament and instantly stood themselves out from the others. The mysterious young Devils, with Balberith as the lead, the [Black Satan of Darkness Dragon King] Team.>>

Balberith and his mysterious Devil teammates easily defeated ultimate-class devils, and they were even able to subdue God-class beings. Every mythology paid attention to them, but also felt terror.

…Of course. They suddenly showed up and even gods were defeated with their overwhelming power. Right now, even though they haven't fought any of the teams tipped to win besides Mahabali-san's team since they participated in the tournament, they have been mostly undefeated and continued to move up in the rankings. On the contrary, somehow, the fact that they had been penalised as a result of violating certain special rules made us realise that they were younger than us. But, this [Black Satan of Darkness Dragon King] Team was already at the level where they had been chosen as one of the winning candidates. By the way, isn't the team's name too long?

Incidentally, the [King] is a high-class Grim Reaper from Olympus. I thought he was somehow connected to the Netherworld, but…. I was more concerned with the [King]'s rank. It wasn't 'ultimate', only 'high-class'. Did they do that because they didn't want to stand out? Or was it… Ahh… I can't figure out their intentions.

Being concerned about the mysterious Devils was necessary of course, but, there were also other players that I had to look out for.

The moment those guys showed up on the TV, I pointed my finger.

"Personally, I am interested in this guy."

Shown on the TV was a special program featuring Sacred Gears, called [Unknown Sacred Gears]. Indeed, a new type of Sacred Gear had caught the eye of Sacred Gear researchers such as the Grigori, and it was currently the subject of much attention.

A certain Sacred Gear user was shown on the screen.

The one player that caught my attention was someone who controlled iron and could create mechanical equipment. Moreover, he could also control electronic devices and use it in a way that I had never seen before. What shocked us was that his Sacred Gear had the ability to even control electronic devices. The Sacred Gear System was created by the God of the Bible a long time ago, so it was definitely surprising to learn that a Sacred Gear could interfere with modern technology.

Ravel then pointed to the guy who could control iron and electronic devices with his abilities.

“That guy is a member of Ruval-oniisama’s team.”

The team of Ravel’s older brother was not only formed with servants that were professionals, but also with a God from the Egyptian mythology who was known as the ancestor of the Phoenix, [The Immortal Sacred Bird, Bennu]! Yes, the team of the Phoenix’s family eldest son had a combination of holy and demonic phoenixes at the center and formed a team together. Their team showed the ‘immortality’ trait to all other players and factions.

The immortal army that even God-class beings couldn't easily defeat kept gaining victory. The guy whose Sacred Gear controlled iron and electronic devices was also a member of that team. On the other hand, the third son of the Phoenix’s clan, Riser Phoenix, continued to struggle in battles, and his elimination in the preliminary round of the tournament had almost become certain. One of the key factors was that his luck on the matching was terrible and he kept getting higher ranked players as his opponents. Lately, Riser keeps complaining to me via communication magic every night, and even I became quite troubled with cheering him up.

There was also another Sacred Gear user who caught our attention. Shown on the screen was the sight of the person who destroyed a large portion of the game field. He was neither a Maou-class nor a God-class being, but a young human — a human Sacred Gear user. The exquisite equipment that the young man used consisted of a longsword and a rifle. When they were wielded, it was certain that the earth would crack and the forests would be erased until nothing was left. It was clear that his Sacred Gear’s power was unique. A longsword… and a rifle, a pair of Sacred Gears!

While everyone focused on the clip, Ravel said to me

“That is… a team centered on a Sacred Gear user, the [King] of the [Shooting Star] Team, Shooting Star-senshu! That team keeps securing victories one after another.”

Xenovia, while being surprised by the massive damage dealt by the long sword and rifle said

“What insane power! In the middle of the match, a certain mythology’s god got blown away, huh… Is it really just a Sacred Gear?”

Simply in terms of power, it was possible to take a God-class being (non-battle type though) on as an enemy. Also, it seemed like he hadn't used his Balance Breaker yet. But, that was only if the devastating power hit its target. Most of them could be dodged.

Irina then continues

“They didn’t really stand out when the qualifiers began, did they? Only after reaching the mid-stage did their rank suddenly go up.”

Indeed, we didn’t hear anything about them in the early stage. Like Irina said, it was only when the mid-stage began that we started to hear the rumour “An unbelievable Sacred Gear user has appeared” a lot of times.

Then my junior, Nakiri Ouryuu, said

“From what I can see, it is possible to discern that this immense power is being mastered gradually. I mean, I saw the recording of their early stage match, but they lost because he couldn’t control his power and it exploded.”

As Nakiri said, I also became interested and watched their early stage match… But, he couldn’t control the Sacred Gear well, and as a result of continuously missing the target, their team got cornered and they suffered a series of defeats. But, the recording also showed that he was gradually getting used to his power every time he fought, and when he entered the middle stage, his power blossomed.

The power and mass of the aura released by the long sword and rifle was out of the ordinary. It’s exactly as Xenovia said, you can’t think that it is just a normal Sacred Gear. Balberith and Verrine were good, the guy that could control iron was good too, this Sacred Gear that holds idiot-like power is also good; it’s as if people that we neither predicted nor imagined are starting to appear. Even though we were surprised, we accepted reality and began to make plans on how to deal with them. In the middle of the final stage of the qualifiers, we also started to see some pretty clear changes among the teams that participated in the tournament. Many of them had also improved.

“Ufufu, maybe the rumour is right”

The one who whispered that, was a pink-haired onee-sama who was lying down on my bed comfortably while looking at the TV --- Roygun Belphegor.

She was relaxing on my bed wearing a daring dress that showed her cleavage. Lately Roygun-san has been secretly participating in our strategy meetings. Because she was so silent while she was beside us, it felt as though she showed up out of nowhere. Also, her aroma is out of this world!

Ravel then asked Roygun-san

“Roygun-sama, what ‘rumour’?”

While fumbling with her pink hair with her hand, she replied

“The number of Longinus, don’t they seem to be increasing?”

[Wh---!]

We were all surprised by that information. Of course! We have no choice to be surprised if we hear that the number of Longinus is increasing! Roygun-san then speaks while sitting up

“The research on Sacred Gears which has been done by Heaven’s Seraphs, along

with the Grigori, has been able to clearly confirm that there are several species that have deviated from normal Sacred Gears. Because of that, there is a discussion on re-classifying these new Sacred Gears. It was my servant who got me that information. This information will also probably be officially delivered to you guys, [DxD], soon."

It was the first time we'd heard such information. It might be because the Sacred Gear's research authority, Azazel-sensei, wasn't here that getting the newest information regarding Sacred Gears has become harder than before.

Right when the TV was showing Gasper, Roygun-san continued to speak.

"I have also heard that the half-vampire on Rias' team also got a Longinus certification."

Gasper got a Longinus certification too! Well, it is certain I've been told that his ability was Longinus-class since last year. The person who was surprised more than anyone by this was Gasper's classmate, Nakiri.

"Vladi has a Longinus! Is this for real…? Well, I guess it's only natural with that ability."

He wasn't sure how to react to the fact that his classmate's ability was a Longinus. He seemed half-happy, and half-frustrated. Because they were both close, it seemed like Nakiri was inevitably worried about Gasper. But, another thing that worried me was Roygun-san's information network. The information just now wasn't officially announced by the Grigori or the Heaven yet. How in the hell did she get that information? It was even faster than [DxD]. It's probably because she, as a former second ranker in the Rating Game has her own information network. By the way, while watching the recording of the match like this time, Roygun-san also gave us valuable advice regarding the tactics for the upcoming tournament.

And, while we were talking about the tournament's new faces and Longinus, there was one person whose mind seemed to be elsewhere. It was Rossweisse-san.

"....."

Even during this discussion, without saying a word, it seemed like she was thinking about something that was bothering her. With a worried look on her face, Asia asked Rossweisse-san

"Rossweisse-san, a-are you okay?"

After talking to her several times, it seems like Rossweisse-san finally noticed and hastily stands up and speaks.

"Eh? Ah, yeah! I-I am fine! If it's about the marriage meeting, I am ready whenever it is!"

When Rossweisse-san made an awkward fist pump, everyone became silent and didn't know how to react.

Ravel then nervously spoke

"U-Umm… We're in the middle of our tournament strategy meeting right now."

With that one sentence, Rossweisse-san's face became red and she panicked as she waved both of her hands about

"Ah! T-This is! S-Sorry! What was wrong with me….."

She then looked a bit depressed and sat back down in her chair. Everyone in the room knew what Rossweisse-san was thinking about. Yes, it's exactly as Rossweisse-san herself said. It's because the day of the marriage meeting between Rossweisse-san and the Norse mythology's chief god, Vidar-san, is getting closer---.

These events occurred just before the last summer vacation of my high school life.

Life.1
A Female Teacher's Marriage Interview

Part I

The next day—.

It happened when the class that Rossweisse-san was in charge of had a quiz.

“.....”

Rossweisse-san was standing on the teacher’s platform as she looked up blankly towards the ceiling. It had always been like this recently. Even at home and in school, she always had this vacant look on her face as she either looked up at the ceiling or in front as if her mind was elsewhere.

“Sensei, sensei, the time is over.”

The female class head confirmed to Rossweisse-san that the time for the quiz had ended. When Rossweisse-san noticed, she quickly pulled herself together and said to everyone

“Ah! Y-Yes! Ok, that’s it! Please pass the test papers forward from the back.”

Well, the class went normally after that, but…

Rossweisse-san’s condition even became popular inside the school, and rumours such as “Did something happen at work or with her private life?” began to spread among the students.

“It must be a boyfriend! She must have found a boyfriend!”

“That Rossweisse-chan has a boyfriend? That’s impossible! That can’t be true, right?”

“She probably lost her money?”

“As a cheapskate who uses 100-yen shops, is she really that troubled by money?”

“Did she get fired?”

“But, she is super serious, isn’t she? So that shouldn’t be the case either, don’t you agree?”

“In that case, boyfriend it is then!”

Various amusing and interesting conversations were held between the girls as well. Watching this from one corner of the classroom were me, Kiba, Matsuda and Motohama. After taking a sip of his popper juice with a straw, Matsuda asked me and Kiba.

“So, what’s the real situation? I mean, as the Occult Research Club advisor, she spends a lot of time with you guys, right?”

While fixing his glasses, Motohama added

“Also, Ise lives together with her. It wouldn’t be weird if you know something. No! If anything, you must know everything! Don’t tell me that she is leaving…”

And so my two dubious buddies asked me and Kiba something like that, but...

Me and Kiba looked at each other and we weren't sure how to answer those questions.

"It's not something that should be spoken to you guys. Anyway, what I can tell you now is that she is not going to quit this school."

I had no choice but to answer like that. Well, it's exactly as they said, we actually do know the reason why Rossweisse-san's been dazing off lately, however…

Yesterday, Rossweisse-san received a partly-forced-request to have a marriage meeting from her hometown, the Norse mythology.

Not only that, the partner is the current chief God of Asgard, Vidar-san! "To have a marriage meeting with a chief God", when we heard about that, we couldn't help but feel surprised! We also got an explanation from Rossweisse-san's grandmother, Göndul-san too. It seemed like, even Göndul-san's opinion was ignored as it had already been decided by the higher-ups. And because of that, cancelling also became impossible at this point.

Göndul-san, via a communication magic circle, said

"I am really sorry… I'll head there tomorrow".

She sounded like she was really sorry about it. It seemed like, Göndul-san was actually opposed to her granddaughter's marriage meeting this time. But, because of the pushy proposal by the Norse Gods, it had become a situation where Rossweisse-san's parents were forced to concede, and even Göndul-san was unable to reject the proposal either.

Wait. I am the one who is done for! Because at any rate, Rossweisse-san is still my servant.

Since Asgard set up a marriage meeting without giving me any information beforehand, I did shoot them a protest letter as both a high-class devil and her master, but…

<<It is Asgard's problem. It has already been decided.>>

We only got such a reply. Nonetheless, me and Ravel kept on requesting them to give us an explanation that we could consent to, however….

"In the end, the marriage meeting will still happen, huh…."

I sluggishly said while looking at the hall's ceiling. Kiba and I then said that we'd go buy something to drink, and we left Matsuda and Motohama behind. At a nearby vending machine that was inside the school, we talked while standing and drinking the juice.

"Rias-oneesan also requested an explanation of the current circumstances via the Gremory family."

Just as Kiba said, Rias did send a protest to Asgard as well. And even though Rossweisse-san wasn't Rias' servant anymore, the fact that Rossweisse-san was still part of the Gremory household didn't change, and that's why we also made an

official request via the Gremory House.

The answer from them was

<<Because the lineage of Odin is in crisis, we need a female from Norse mythology who is able to birth an excellent heir.>>

A successor problem! Or so it seemed, however… On that side, the chief God Odin-jiisan along with his eldest son, the God Baldur had gone into the Isolation Barrier Field to exterminate Trihexa. The ones who remained here were Odin's children, and the one that Asgard chose as the next generation chief God was Vidar.

However, although Vidar-san had many mistresses, he hadn't gotten married yet. And so, it was precisely because he had become a chief God that the Asgardian Gods began to introduce him to candidates for marriage one after another, rushing him to make children as soon as possible. After arguing back and forth with Asgard, we were finally able to feel a bit relieved when they responded

"There is no need to be engaged anymore, but for now, please just attend the marriage interview."

And such was the answer we got.

"Because it's the Gods who set this up, there are also some points where you can't easily pull back, huh?" said Rias.

But… I feel like there are so many Gods that are so prideful. In the end, the final decision would be according to Rossweisse-san's own will. Although she herself was extremely surprised and confused, she didn't have any problem with attending the meeting, regardless of whether she intended to get married or not. Such was the answer we arrived at. Even though the talk was forced and hurried, because she felt that she had been looked after by the Gods in her hometown all this time, and the conditions had also been relaxed a bit, it was quite difficult to decline.

And with that, it was official that tomorrow, Rossweisse-san would have a marriage meeting with Vidar-san in Japan.

…A God's marriage problem, huh. Well, the marriage of a mythology's representative sure is important, but…. Why does it have to be one of my servants, Rossweisse-san of all people? Even though she had been abandoned by Odin-jiisan, there was no doubt that she was an excellent Valkyrie. Her magic ability was good, her acquired knowledge on powerful barrier techniques was also good, and even among her fellow Valkyries, her strength was undoubtable. That must have been the reason why she caught the attention of Asgard. Well, Rossweisse-san also contributed much to the Evil Dragon War, after all...it's only natural that her value rose. But there was also this feeling inside me "Please don't decide things on your own" that I strongly felt! It's because she is my comrade… or rather, because she is my servant. She is also participating in the tournament with me, as well as doing devil jobs together. Either in battle or in jobs, Rossweisse-san is important! What we've achieved until now, it's our precious…. If left like this, they will continue to decide things on their own until they are married.

"It's okay, you can still stay as a servant, so can you become Vidar-sama's wife?"

The day I hear something like that, as expected even I would…!

“Ise-kun, you should think calmly. I know you are angry, but the other party are the Norse Gods, if you just charge in recklessly, we might not only leave a bad impression but also damage our relationship with them in the future.”

Kiba said to me. Being told like that, I suddenly realised, and asked Kiba

“Do I look like I am angry to you?”

Kiba nodded with a forced smile.

“Whenever you think about Rossweisse-san, your expression looks somewhat bitter. Not only Ise-kun, but everyone who is a member of Rias-oneesan’s peerage too. But, I understand how you feel. Especially Ise-kun, since you are her master, it’s all the more.”

……Everyone, starting from Rias’ peerage (my servants included) always made a bitter face whenever this topic came up. Looking from the perspective of me and my comrades, it’s only natural that we got mad.

Well, in reality, it’s not a topic that we can welcome. To be honest, I want to say a thing or two to Vidar-san and the gods of Norse mythology. After finishing the drink, Kiba then said

“You are going to talk with Rias-oneesan and Akeno-san after this, right?”

Just as Kiba said, I was planning to go to the university branch of Kuoh Academy after school. It was because I wanted to discuss things regarding Rossweisse-san once again with those two. After all, the marriage meeting was just two days away---.

Part 2

And with that, I went to the University of Kuoh Academy after school. Because the university was close to the high school, it wasn't like I had never come here before. However, the students who attended the university wore their own clothes. So for someone wearing a uniform to visit the university, I did stand out from the others.

The appointment location was a cafe that was situated in a corner of the university campus. It was essentially a cafe run by the university students, but students from Kuoh High School and people who came to the university for work went there sometimes as well. Rias and Akeno-san frequently sit together at their usual seats on the terrace, however…it seemed like there were some other girls sitting together with Rias and Akeno-san today. Were they university friends? I wasn't sure, but they seemed like they were having fun, so I didn't want to ruin the mood by being a nuisance. I guess I'll just come back later.

And after having that thought, it was as if Rias and Akeno-san noticed me, so they simultaneously waved their hands at me.

At times like this, I tend to think that Rias and Akeno-san are good at sensing my presence. As I couldn't afford to run, I walked over to the seats that they were in. You could say that the gazes of their friends hurt me, or rather, it seemed like I was being watched with keen interest. I was super embarrassed!

I sat down in the chair between Rias and Akeno-san. Rias then introduced me to her university friends.

"He is my and Akeno's boyfriend. As I said earlier, we're engaged."

—. What a shocking introduction! She even told them about me being Rias' and… Akeno-san's boyfriend + our engagement! Normally, people would have been shocked by that kind of talk! I couldn't help but feel surprised by the sudden introduction, but one of their friends suddenly screamed out "Kyaa!" with a high-pitched voice.

The friends then began to talk.

"He is Gremory-san and Himejima-san's boyfriend!? I heard that he is younger!"

"Amazing! To be able to get these two beautiful girls as girlfriends!"

"In Rias-san's country, it's normal to have several wives, and it's also okay to have a lot of husbands, right!?"

"On the contrary, I wonder how would it feel to have a lot of boyfriends? I might even be admired!"

Ah, so that's what they were talking about. Well, it's certain that if it's Rias's country, the Underworld, then harems and reverse harems do exist, so what Rias said technically wasn't a lie. Rias seemed somewhat proud. Was she satisfied that she was able to introduce me?

B-But, if I were to be known as their partner, this talk would spread like wildfire to the

high school and could turn out to be a terrible thing….

The fact that Rias and I were going out with each other was basically a secret from the students after all. I had only told several people about it (Matsuda and Motohama know, but they keep silent for me). But, Rias' friend was a friend from the high school escalator program, so she must have known me as a bad person, but....

Akeno-san whispered to me

(I used magic so that basic information about Ise-kun won't get exposed. The only thing that they grasped was the fact that you are my and Rias' boyfriend, that's all.)

Ah, manipulation magic. Now that I looked closely at their friends, their eyes did look like they were soulless as if they had been hypnotised. So that's why they didn't find out about my true identity. Hold on, but that means the boyfriend that they've been introducing until now is…. Akeno-san then laughed cutely.

(After all, I am a uni student. It's only natural that I want to boast about having a boyfriend, right?)

AAAaaAAAaaAAAA! If you say such maidenly words to me, I won't be able to resist! Please, please, as long as my basic information doesn't get leaked out, please boast about me as much as you like! If I were to be honest, I also wanted to tell the truth that I was their boyfriend, but, it would definitely be troublesome in many ways. And because of that, I had no choice but to endure.

One of their friends asked Akeno-san

"How do you feel about having a younger boyfriend?"

Akeno-san's cheeks turned red and she happily answered

"He might be younger than me, but he is dependable. If I really had to decide, then I feel like I am the one who gets spoiled."

"The big-sister-like Himejima-san gets spoiled instead? I thought it was the opposite!"

"I might also want a younger boyfriend!"

And such was the girls' talk that the friends joyfully engaged in.

Because Rias and Akeno-san seemed like they were having so much fun, I joined in and participated in the girls' talk for a while. After all, being able to talk with female university students sure is fun!

"—So, what happened? You came here to talk, right?"

Rias asked me after the talk while being surrounded by university girls ended.

The topic was my original purpose, which was to ask for advice about Rossweisse-san.

Rias then continued

"I personally don't agree with the forced marriage meeting either. But, right now, her master is you, Ise. While respecting her thoughts is reasonable, your thoughts are also important."

‘…What would you do in this situation?’ If I were to ask her opinion like that, I’m sure she would feel disgusted. After all --- I am a high-class Devil, the master who made Rossweisse-san my servant.

Rias also said

“Everything will soon be clear. Ise, how do you feel about the marriage meeting? --- Yes, what is Rossweisse to you, Ise? Is she just a servant? Or is she…”

Rias then stopped.

To me, Rossweisse-san is… But, one thing is clear. When Rossweisse-san and Vidar-san’s marriage meeting got decided by the Norse Gods on their own, I was extremely mad. Disgusted even. The unpleasant feeling about my precious servant being forced to attend a marriage interview was one of the factors, but the memories that I spent together with Rossweisse-san until now kept flashing across my mind one after another….

I strongly felt that ‘my precious thing is going to be taken away’. Rias looked at her watch and said “It’s time” as she stood up.

“Leave the bill to me. Akeno, I’ll go on first.”

After saying that to Akeno-san, Rias then said to me while smiling

“I’ll always be your and Rossweisse’s ally, you know? That fact won’t change no matter what. That’s why you should find your own solution.”

Because Rias had to finish some personal errands for the Gremory House, she left first. Akeno-san and I were left behind. Akeno-san smiled as she said

“Hey, Ise-kun. Do you remember the engagement party between Rias and Riser Phoenix that was held last year?”

“Yeah.”

Ah, that’s right, it’s been more than a year since that incident huh. Because there were so many things that happened, it felt as though that incident happened long ago.

Akeno-san then continued

“Rias might not say it in words, but this incident seems like a repeat of that time.”

---.

Her engagement and Rossweisse-san’s marriage interview… That’s right, even though the circumstances are different, the fact where their future was decided one-sidedly is the same. It’s only natural that Rias thought that Rossweisse-san’s current situation is a repeat of that.

Akeno-san continued

“At that time, how did you feel, how did you think, and how did you act, Ise-kun? Rias and Rossweisse-san are different, but Rossweisse-san to us, and above all, to you is a precious servant, Ise-kun. That is certain, right? I don’t know how things will turn

out in the marriage interview, however, when Vidar-sama decides that he wants to marry, your feelings and actions will inevitably come pouring out. But, Ise-kun, this is the one thing that you should remember."

With a serious expression, Akeno-san said

"At the time you said "No", your enemy was the Phoenix House. But, this time --- it's a God. You should prepare yourself to have the determination to take back Rossweisse-san from a God."

Taking Rossweisse-san back from a God…

Akeno-san then suddenly changed her expression

"But, you've also grown a lot from your experiences over the past year. Compared to the time you charged in recklessly, you've become far more mature…. Looking at your expression now, you seem calm. Surely, if this were a year ago, you would have charged in recklessly to Asgard and Rias would be mad."

Ahaha, that might be possible. I did charge in to Rias' engagement party that time. After that, due to various things, even if something crazy happened, I would think first and ask other people for their opinions.

…I became a senior in high school, and also became a high-class Devil, and above all, I understand that my power --- the power of the Heavenly Dragon and the Dragon God might have an influence on the world. If I don't think first then act, I might cause trouble to other people.

…That said, when the moment comes, I have to take back my precious servant from a God, huh. The enemy isn't someone whom I can challenge half-assedly. But I--- . After all, Rossweisse-san is important to me as a servant, or perhaps---. That was a question that I had to answer---.

And then, it was the day of Rossweisse-san and Vidar-san's marriage interview---.

We, the authorised people (the new and old Occult Research Club members) gathered in a certain traditional Japanese restaurant in Tokyo. To our surprise, Vidar-san's faction chose a traditional Japanese restaurant (a valuable shop as they handle even supernatural beings). So, we also adapted to them by having Rossweisse-san wear an elegant kimono. By the way, it was Akeno-san who was in charge of dressing her up.

All of the concerned parties were waiting in a room---.

"Thank you for waiting. Everyone, you look the same as I last saw you."

The person who appeared was Rossweisse-san's grandmother, Göndul-san! That person was still the same as when I met her before, she had this strict atmosphere around her. After taking a glance at her granddaughter, Göndul-san apologised to us.

"I am really sorry for the inconvenience caused. Especially Hyoudou Issei-kun. Even though my granddaughter is an important servant… I could not reject the higher-ups' decision."

She also apologised to me directly. I also---

“N-No, no, basically, I also disagree, but for now, let’s just watch over her. We’ll answer after that.”

I replied.

As soon as Rossweisse-san noticed her grandmother, Göndul-san, she looked displeased.

“On this occasion, even though it’s a proposal from my hometown, I have so many things to say.”

Göndul-san took a breath as she sighed.

“I understand that, Rose. But, it’s also your fault that you didn’t marry and raise a family quickly. Because you showed them an opportunity, it has now become a situation where even I can’t reject them, you know.”

“D-Didn’t marry and raise a family, you say!?”

Göndul-san scolded Rossweisse-san for being hesitant.

“The truth is, you could have just let your master, the Sekiryuutei who went to the trouble of making you his servant approach you and establish that fact, you know.”

“Even if you say that, I don’t know a single thing about men!”

The grandmother and granddaughter began to quarrel!

“I thought I already told you to let him do perverted things to you!”

“You don’t have to say that to me, grandma! E-E-Even I, w-w-w-want to do perverted things you know!”

What are these two talking about!? Rossweisse-san whose face had become red said that with a loud voice! Hearing the conversation between those two, the girls fixed their gaze onto me. Shirone a.k.a. Koneko-chan asked me

“Why didn’t you do perverted things to her?”

K-Koneko-chan! You’ve become quite brave to say such things after the proposal, huh!? I then scratched my cheek as I said

“T-That’s, umm, because the tournament and the jobs as a high-class devil piled up… I-I also want to do many perverted things!”

If I could do those perverted things, of course I would do it! But because of my jobs as a high-class devil, my position as the Oppai Dragon, and also due to our participation in the World Tournament on top of school life, I was quite busy, you know!?

I did come across a perverted situation occasionally, but there were only busy days besides that. If anything, that was the reason why it felt like oppai were distant. Xenovia nodded as if in agreement with Rossweisse-san.

“Well, we also rarely find situations where we can do perverted things.”

Irina also agreed

“Because there are so many girls, even if we were to use the room, there might be someone who comes in and interrupts.”

...You guys, perverted this, perverted that, this is a place for a marriage interview, you know!? Well, I also did talk about perverted things with a loud voice too. Ravel then replied

“Perverted this and perverted that, everyone, please remember that today is Rossweisse-sama’s marriage interview, okay?”

The quarrel between granddaughter and grandmother made the atmosphere inside the room so awkward that we couldn’t say anything. But, a shop employee came to the room and said

“The partner is ready for the marriage interview.”

The time for the marriage interview finally arrived, without waiting for us---.

Part 3

Now, about the marriage interview...

The representative of Rossweisse-san's family was her grandmother, Göndul-san. And since Rossweisse-san is currently a member of [Hyoudou Issei's Peerage], I sat on the same side as her master. While Rossweisse-san and Göndul-san dressed formally, I on the other hand was wearing my uniform... Well, I certainly am still a student though…

However, we only intended to greet each other. After that, it was supposed to go like 'Let's leave it to them, shall we', and we planned to leave those two alone. Well, it was like a normal Japanese marriage interview. Because they were doing it in Japan, they wanted to do it the Japanese-style.

There was a table placed in the middle of the spacious Japanese-style room, and we sat on one side together with Rossweisse-san. In the garden that could be seen from the Japanese-style room, a small bamboo fountain made a small pleasant "koton" noise. By the way, Göndul-san used magic so that my comrades waiting in a different room could see what was happening in this room live. Because my friends were essentially peeping, I didn't think that the strict Göndul-san would have allowed such a thing, but…it seems like this incident had many things to be considerate of.

While waiting and sitting in seiza[1][1][1] style, Vidar-san appeared in a white suit with three ladies who followed him. He was a handsome man with an unshaven face, platinum blonde hair and gold pupils. From his looks, it seemed like he was only in his early twenties. The three ladies who followed him were all beautiful, but they all showed a strict expression. Because their aura felt like it had a God's nature, I thought they were all Gods, but…

Vidar-san looked at me and Rossweisse-san as if he was evaluating us. No, I was certain that he was evaluating Rossweisse-san and me, her master---. As if he could already tell what the ladies' expressions looked like, Vidar-san took a breath and said

"Fulla, Hlin, Gná, I told you not to stare with those stern eyes. We're being rude to them, are we not?"

The women responded to Vidar-san with a stern voice.

"Vidar-sama, we'll leave the rest to you, but..."

"This is an important duty as the current chief God."

"Even if the other party is a former Valkyrie, this is also for the sake of Asgard's future."

Vidar-san looked annoyed by the ladies' words, and gestured with his hand to shoo them off.

"Yeah-, okay okay. It's fine, so please leave the rest to me"

The ladies then reluctantly left the room. Rossweisse-san and I felt unsure of what to

say, and Göndul-san looked a bit displeased as she raised an eyebrow. Judging by that attitude alone, we could only imagine that the relationship between Göndul-san and those three women wasn't very good. Vidar-san then sat down in front of us. He immediately sat cross-legged and made a bitter laugh as he said

"My bad. Those three goddesses are my…to the family of Odin, they're like maids who have served us since a long time ago. They have also been looking after me since I was small. It was also them who took the initiative of choosing this place…. Well, it's something that not even I could decline."

After saying that, Vidar-san then greeted us.

"I am Vidar. The chief God of Norse mythology. Please be generous and overlook any problems."

And then, it was Rossweisse-san's turn to return the greeting

"I am Rossweisse. I was Odin-sama's personal Valkyrie until last year. I am currently under the care of Hyoudou Issei-sama as a Devil servant."

Next, Göndul-san gave a simple greeting

"I am her grandmother, Göndul."

I lightly cleared my throat and said after adjusting my posture

"I am Hyoudou Issei, a high-class devil and currently Rossweisse-san's master. Please take care of us."

It was a formal greeting, however…well, I'm sure it's going to be fine like this. Then after the greetings, Göndul-san said,

"...Well now, let's leave the rest to these two, shall we?"

Right when we were about to leave our seats --- Vidar-san gestured with his hands to stop us.

"You guys don't have to go. I don't mind letting both of you stay."

The sudden offer made me and Göndul-san look at each other. ...Vidar-san said that while laughing, however he seemed like he was serious about it, so we remained. In the meantime, we ordered drinks and chose oolong tea, while Vidar-san ordered --- beer. To order a beer in a marriage interview…it just proved that he really was Odin-jiisan's son.

After that, Rossweisse-san and Vidar-san started talking casually. At first they started with something simple like 'Today is nice, huh' or 'How is your life being a teacher in Japan?', but eventually, the subject became Odin-jiisan. Vidar-san said with a bitter expression

"My father is the best and won't lose to the chief Gods of other mythologies when it comes to perverted things. Often at times, before I knew it, new brothers and sisters had been born, you know? He holds many titles, such as 'The All-knowing', 'The Great Noble God' , 'The Father of Victory' , and 'The One-eyed Hero'. However, I think the most appropriate title for him is 'the perverted old man'."

Rossweisse-san also agreed.

“Odin-sama really is a perverted man. When the various mythologies were trying to form an alliance, he did go to all of their places, however, he always became interested in the girls of each place. And when I noticed that he was already gone, he always ended up in human towns where he’d be picking up girls.”

“The Goddesses in that land are charming. There are female humans in this land and it has perverted customs, or something like that. No matter the Goddesses’ race, he will pay attention to the perverted customs of each destination.”

Vidar-san’s story got swallowed by Rossweisse-san as she said “That’s right, that’s right!” and nodded as she expressed her strong agreement.

“Even when he came to Japan, he suddenly somehow knew about all of the lewd shops and forced me to go with him… Argh, just remembering it makes my blood boil!”

After that, Rossweisse-san and Vidar-san had fun bad-mouthing Odin-jiisan. Me too…because I didn’t know what to say, I had no choice but to show a forced-smile, whilst Göndul-san who was sitting beside me also sighed as she struggled with the atmosphere.

Rossweisse-san had gotten quite heated-up over that topic. Vidar-san put his hand on his chin and looked at Rossweisse-san with great interest. Rossweisse-san said

“Anyway, I still have many things to talk about regarding Odin-sama!”

Vidar-san then told Rossweisse-san

“Well, at first I thought you were a chaste woman, but you are actually pretty cute, huh.”

Rossweisse-san was astonished by those words, and after she understood the meaning, her face turned super red. Rossweisse-san panicked as she said

“W-W-W-W-W-W-W-W-W-What did you just say!? G-Geez!”

As she panicked, Rossweisse-san picked up all of the refilled drinks that had just been brought over, and drank all of them at once.

Vidar-san then exclaimed ‘Ah!’

“That’s my beer, you know?”

That’s right! I also noticed that! The drink that Rossweisse-san gulped down wasn’t oolong tea, but the beer for Vidar-san! It was liquor! It was alcohol! I remembered what happened at the field trip last year! When we were attacked by the Hero Faction at Togetsu Bridge, Rossweisse-san was --- drunk! After that, Rossweisse-san…! Göndul-san seemed to recall something like this happening before as well, and she said “Oh no…” as she put her hands on her face.

And then Rossweisse-san herself… After drinking all the beer at once, she slammed the glass back down onto the table.

“Hick-, like I fwaid, that damned Odin-jiji is really-really perverted, vyou know?”

---It had already started!

Yes! This person instantly became like this if alcohol entered her body! A Valkyrie whose personality did a complete one-eighty when drunk! In a completely intoxicated manner, Rossweisse-san yelled

“Five more beers please!”

Vidar-san was completely confused and his mouth hung wide-open. Rossweisse-san then approached Vidar-san.

“Vidar-sama! You understand right? That you are also perverted! Because you are thwat old fart’s son, it’d be weird if you aren’t perverted! After all, you probably attended this marriage interview just because you want my body right!”

Without delay, Rossweisse-san drank the beer that just arrived, and after drinking yet another glass of beer --- to my surprise, she suddenly hugged meeeeeeeeee! With moist eyes, Rossweisse-san then said

“Too bad! But I! Will become Hyoudou Issei-kun’s! Wife! It’s the pwomising Oppai Dragon, you know? It means I will be married to a rich man with power! And on top all that, he is also kind to me!”

Rossweisse-san then swigged down another glass. She drank all of those beers at an unbelievable pace!

“Compared to Valhalla, the conditions in the Underworld are more favourable! The people around me are also kind!”

As if he had gotten used to the drunk Rossweisse-san, Vidar-san amusedly asked

“You want to become the Sekiryuutei’s wife because you want his welfare, huh?”

Rossweisse-san ‘smack’ slammed another glass down on the table.

“Welfare! To a working woman, it’s a privilege! Even though that might be the case, Ise-kun is…someone who will do anything for my sake! He might be younger, but he is a master who is dependable! For my sake…”

Suddenly, Rossweisse-san began to weep. So crying was also one of her drunk habits, huh…

“He risked his own life to save me, after all! He immediately came to my rescue when that sister-loving bastard Euclid kidnapped me! I was so happy! Uwaaaaaaaaaaaa!”

…Aa~ah, she blubbered while holding on to me….

This was no longer a marriage interview. As if a hard-fought war had ended, Göndul-san also dropped her head broken-heartedly. Vidar-san wasn't even mad though. He was just looking at the current situation with one of his hands on his cheeks, looking somewhat amused. This man is a big-hearted God, huh. Even in this super-rude situation, he wasn't even mad and followed along with us. Having no choice, I said "Okay, okay. I will always save you, so please stop crying" while comforting her by patting her back.

I also thought to myself “What in the world am I doing?” but my current priority was to put Rossweisse-san in a good mood again. Finally, Rossweisse-san stopped crying.

A girl then appeared from the balcony---. A woman with light blue hair wearing a black suit -- she was super-duper beautiful! I had never directly met this person before, however, I had seen her on the TV several times. The beautiful girl swept her long hair aside, giving Rossweisse-san a stern look.

“You are weak to alcohol as usual, huh, Rose.”

Rossweisse-san reacted to those words, and looked at the source of that voice. And then, her glassy eyes turned into a surprised look.

“---Senpai.”

Although she should’ve been drunk, Rossweisse-san stood up and straightened herself. Rossweisse-san had been heavily drunk until just now, but her expression stiffened as she said

“My intoxication has completely disappeared.”

Indeed, it really did seem like she had awoken from her intoxication. And the woman who could make Rossweisse-san regain consciousness in a single moment was --- Brynhildr-san. She was a member of the [Leisure of the Kings] Team that Vidar-san also belonged to.

Ravel had explained to us earlier

[She is like a representative of the Valkyries. For generations, it has been the name which is inherited by the most powerful Valkyrie.]

That’s right, this beautiful woman is the strongest Valkyrie, Vidar-san’s team member, and also Rossweisse-san’s senior in the Norse mythology. Every time we see this woman on screen, Rossweisse-san always looks terrified. It seems like she was often reprimanded back when she was a Valkyrie in the Norse mythology.

Rossweisse-san then said

“You came here, huh.”

“I am currently accompanying the present chief God, Vidar-sama. I didn’t think that I would be able to see your poor drunken behaviour here, you know?”

Rossweisse-san didn’t have anything to say in return to her senior. Brynhildr-san coldly continued

“It is you, after all. I am sure that you mistook Vidar-sama’s drink for yours and drank it…that clumsiness of yours, it looks like it hasn’t changed since then, huh. So, do you think you are fit to be Sekiryuutei-dono’s servant?”

“Uu…”

Rossweisse-san looked like she was unable to say anything in return. Brynhildr-san interpreted Rossweisse-san’s silence as ‘so-so’.

“Brynhildr, it’s fine isn’t it? It was fun for me, you know?”

Brynhildr-san sighed in response to Vidar-san's statement.

"...For God's sake, you're just like Odin-sama. You really do like these kinds of things."

Vidar-san's mischievous laughter was just like Odin-jiisan's. Then, he looked at me and Rossweisse-san and said

"I quite liked this marriage interview. Why don't we get engaged, Rossweisse?"

……

…Me and Rossweisse-san were stunned by the sudden statement for a second, but when we realised it---.

""EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEHH?""

We simultaneously cried out loud, and from the other room as well

[EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEHH?]

Many such voices of surprise could be heard. It seemed like the other guys who were waiting in a different room overheard our conversation via magic, and they also exclaimed in surprise. Of course! Even though he saw Rossweisse-san's drunken behaviour, Vidar-san gave an 'OK' as he laughed! All of my comrades believed that this marriage interview was doomed!

Vidar-san then added

"Rossweisse said this. [He will do anything for my sake. He risked his life to save me], and such. If that's really the case, I want to see it."

Vidar-san laughed fearlessly as he pointed his finger at me and declared war!

"In the upcoming match, why don't we make a bet over Rossweisse. If you win, I won't marry her. How is that?"

A challenge from Vidar-san! Nearby, Brynhildr-san put her hand against her forehead, seemingly disappointed by the chief God's response. But… As for us --- it ain't a joke! Originally, I had never planned to give Rossweisse-san away just like that, and I also have things to say regarding this matter too!

I then replied to Vidar-san with a serious expression

"The problem is not Rossweisse-san being the object of our bet! It's because you guys keep making decisions on your own. It feels unpleasant to not even be consulted about such things. But since your mythology has its own circumstances, I forgave this marriage interview. However, that is merely a formality."

I declared to the chief God of Asgard.

"This person, Rossweisse-san, she is my precious comrade and servant! Even if my enemy is a Norse God, I have no plans to give her up just like that! Things like bets don't matter. If you are targeting Rossweisse-san, then that means---"

I approached Vidar-san, and our faces were so close that our heads almost collided as I declared

“Even if you are a God, I will defeat you!”

A year after the incident of me breaking into Rias’ engagement party, I thought I had become more adult-like and could think calmly, but… As expected, I can’t stand things like this. Those who try to steal what’s mine, even if they are Gods --- I have no choice but to defeat them!

Vidar-san stared at me as he heard my declaration, and his expression became uplifted.

“This is it! This is it! A fight against a Heavenly Dragon. It wouldn’t be real if you didn’t say such words!”

Vidar-san and I glared at each other.

The impending match between the [Sekiryuutei of Blazing Truth] Team and [Leisure of the Kings] Team had gotten even more heated-up before the curtains were even raised---.

Notes

1. Formal sitting positio

Life.2
The Ocean of Milk and the Maou's [Game]

Part I

“---Wait, I did glare at him as I challenged him to a fight, but what about the strategy…”

The day after the marriage interview, all members of the [Sekiryuutei of the Blazing Truth] Team gathered in my room in the Hyoudou residence to have a meeting regarding the match against the [Leisure of the Kings] team.

---I racked my brains as I folded my arms. The match was going to begin soon and we had already planned to undergo our special training routines until the last moment. But there was still a limit to that, and above all else, our enemy this time was...

All of the team members sat on the floor and formed a circle, while the list of members of the [Leisure of the Kings] Team was placed in the middle.

[King]	Typhon
[Queen]	Apollon
[Rook]	Vidar
[Knight]	Bryhindlr
[Bishop]	Artemis
[Pawn x5]	Midgardsormr
[Pawn]	Orthrus
[Pawn]	Sphinx
[Pawn]	Hydra

---It was a formidable lineup.

...The King of Monsters, Typhon, who held the [King] piece was a God-class being… moreover, he also brought along some Gods whom I knew. Other than Midgardsormr, the remaining [Pawn] pieces were often changed. Yes, five [Pawn] pieces were held by one of the Five Great Dragon Kings, Midgardsormr. This was probably going to be a reunion after the incident with Loki, but… Every time he appeared in a match, he would just sleep throughout the whole match. I had never seen him wake up and fight....

Midgardsormr only started participating halfway through. If we’re talking about the matches of the lazy Dragon King, he just ‘thump’ drops his giant body on the game field and sleeps for the rest of the match. If the field isn’t big enough, his giant body will get in the way of the match for both the [Leisure of the Kings] team and the opposing team.

I don’t know why Vidar-san and his comrades called on Midgardsormr, but why did

he also respond to their call? Perhaps there was a contract between him and the Norse Mythology. While the participation of Midgardsormr was an issue, but as expected, the main problem was still Typhon and the other Gods. And this time, we watched a recording of the match on the TV.

The recording of Typhon, Vidar-san, Apollon-san, and the Goddess Artemis-san easily defeating the enemy team was being shown. The King of Monsters, 'Typhon', became the origin of the word 'typhoon'. His power that went on a rampage in the tournament is said to be equal to Fenrir in serious mode, or even stronger. An unskillful God wouldn't even be an enemy to him. Every time he performed an attack, the atmosphere around him shivered and caused a strange weather phenomenon inside the field as if he could control a storm. The fact that he was able to control the weather was the same as Dulio, but… Typhon was a few levels better than him. It was extremely troublesome how he wouldn't show any mercy regardless of who his enemies were. It wasn't as troublesome as Crom Cruach's fire breath, but it was still capable of defeating all enemies with its enormous power.

Apollon-san is the Sun God. Even ultimate-class devils won't stand a chance against his elemental abilities, and above all, with his overwhelming powers of light, he is capable of purging all Devils and the like. He is a natural enemy to Devils and Vampires and honestly speaking, one direct hit from him would be equivalent to a guaranteed retirement.

Vidar-san excelled in using all kinds of magic, and being the son of Odin, he used them skillfully too. From attack to support, and even weakening magic too. However, Vidar-san's number one attack was---. On the screen, the figure of Vidar-san defeating a giant monster with a barrage of consecutive light kicks was being shown. On the other screen, a Devil from a certain famous house got blown away by Vidar-san's high kick, destroying a distant wall.

Yes, Vidar-san's strong point is his kicks in hand-to-hand combat. …The shoes that Vidar-san wore emitted the radiance of magic.

Rossweisse-san said

"As I have said before, Vidar-san's foot technique is his forte. The shoes that he wears have been forged with a Gods' magic. It is said that even Fenrir could be crushed with those."

According to the story, when Loki created Fenrir in ancient times, Odin-jiisan prepared those shoes as a countermeasure --- and he gave those armoured shoes to Vidar-san.

"When that footwear is combined with his foot technique, it is said that Vidar-san's power rivals even the Thunder God Thor." added Rossweisse-san.

The names of Gods from legend kept on appearing. A year ago, I wouldn't have been able to even imagine the idea of rivaling them or being their opponents. There's no way I would have been smiling. But, they're our next opponent and we must fight. If we don't win---. I suddenly looked at Rossweisse-san.

....I will win. No matter who they are, I can't afford to hand her over to them. ...But, our opponents are powerful and famous Gods….

Rossweisse-san was captivated by the great efforts in the match done by her senior, Brynhildr-san. Offence, defence, support, using various kinds of magic, going full-burst at times, occasionally enhancing the physical abilities of her teammates, and sometimes setting a trap on the field. Those things can also be done by Rossweisse-san, but because her opponent didn't waste any time nor energy and invoked magic with such refined movements that we couldn't find any openings.

Every time Rossweisse-san saw her senior's magic in the recordings, she said

"This technique, that technique, and that technique too. activation time is considerably faster than mine. As expected."

Even though it was the same magic, the proficiency, speed, and accuracy were incomparable.

"Even if the magic's power output is the same, if their activation time and accuracy are better, we'll lose by numbers," added Bina-shi.

After hearing Bina-shi's words, Rossweisse-san held the Misteltein wand in her hands even tighter. It was a legendary magic weapon that was endowed with powerful magic. If we included that, Rossweisse-san and Ravel estimated that she might be able to surpass Brynhildr-san. But, if we only look at the activation speed alone…

"I still haven't mastered this, but I would like it to be in shape before the tournament," said Rossweisse-san wholeheartedly.

Well, the enemy is top-ranked after all. To be honest, others might look at us and think that we're naturally going to lose. However, with the support of many people, and taking Rossweisse-san's Misteltein wand into account, we've gotten stronger in many aspects as well.

Ravel then said to all the members.

"If you think about it, our opponent is stronger. After all, our opponents are the Gods that everyone knows about. However, because we have Ise-sama's dragonification and Bina-shi, it is a fact that we also have a chance to win against them. The probability of winning is not high, but…let's make our chance of winning higher."

[Yeah!]

Everyone responded boldly! All that was left was to face them with the intention of winning! However, we also had things that we were worried about. It was about the training. Xenovia looked troubled as she stretched her neck.

"It's good to face them with the intention to win, but the crucial training…."

Yes, currently, the number of places where we could train was limited. Due to the incident which happened when the Grim Reapers of the Netherworld attacked us in our own training space the other day, security had to be reconsidered. The situation wasn't entirely safe right now, and there was no guarantee that those bad guys wouldn't come back for a second time. That's why we couldn't train as we please.

This wasn't only happening to our [Sekiryuutei of Blazing Truth] Team, but also to Rias' team. In other words, since the incident of the attack from Thanatos' faction,

everyone who was associated with the Gremory peerage was now confused regarding the training ground. The day of the match was pretty soon after the beginning of our summer holidays. We didn't really have much time. Well, it's time to think with everyone on what to do. Just then, Rias knocked on the door and came in.

"Am I interrupting?"

"No, what is it?" I asked her.

She then continued.

"There was a report from Ajuka-sama. All persons concerned are to gather in the VIP Room."

There was a message from the great Ajuka-sama. He could be our saviour here.

My team and Rias' team gathered in the VIP room. Well, it's roughly everyone who lived here though. The magic circle placed on the top of the table in the VIP room was deployed, and the face of Ajuka Beelzebub-sama projected in the air from there.

[It's only temporary, but I have prepared a training ground for you guys. It is a safe place, so please rest assured.]

The contact from Beelzebub-sama was good news! The members of both teams cheered because of this. Oh---, we're grateful! If it is a training ground that Beelzebub-sama prepared, it should be safe! Now we can train until the match begins! For god's sake, I still don't know what those skeleton gods were planning, but making our lives harder was not something tolerable.

Beelzebub-sama then looked at Nakiri

[Ouryuu, bring everyone to the said place]

Nakiri reacted to that as if he remembered something.

"T-That, so that's what you mean?"

[Yes. That's what I meant. I entrust you as the guide.]

Oh, it seemed like Nakiri knew about training ground that Beelzebub-sama had prepared for us. After that Beelzebub-sama looked at me.

[Also, there is something important that I must tell you. Actually, Hyoudou Issei-kun, there is a written-down matter that the Hindu mythology wants you to consider.]

… A-A matter that the Hindu mythology wants me to consider….?

Because I am not really familiar with the mythology, the only thing that came to my mind was lord Shiva and the prince of the Asura Gods Mahabali.

I asked Beelzebub-sama

"...Is it from… lord Shiva?"

[Nope, to my surprise, it is actually from Indra --- the Heavenly Emperor, Sakra. He said that he has a plan to make Hyoudou Issei-kun stronger.]

[...!?]

Most of the members here were surprised by the report that Beelzebub-sama gave!

Of course! For that God of War who wore an aloha shirt to have a proposal to me! It's certain that the Heavenly Emperor Sakra is a part of the Hindu mythology! S-Strengthening plan? I-It sounded like he was going to drag me into something bad… I became fully alert. Rias then put her finger on her chin and said while thinking

"For the Heavenly Emperor Sakra to help the enemy…"

However, Beelzebub-sama looked pleasant.

[That God of heaven looks like he is really enjoying the tournament. He even said that he would like to make this tournament a success so that one can be held next time and the time after that. And so, the Heavenly Emperor Sakra wants to hold a ceremony in a certain mythology's territory for Hyoudou Issei-kun. The name of this land is made up of the words 'Sea' and 'Breast', the 'Ocean of Milk']

---Ocean of Milk!?

What is that dream-filled world!? T-That is not something that was recently made, and is actually recorded in mythology!? Beelzebub-sama then continued on...

[From this point onwards, I heard that a messenger will come and guide you. Please follow that person. Well, I'm sure that the Heavenly Emperor wouldn't do anything bad.]

... Just me, going to the Ocean of Milk, huh.

I looked at Ravel to check 'Is it okay for me to go?'.

"I trust Ajuka Beelzebub-sama, and would like Issei-sama to go train under the Heavenly Emperor, Sakra. I am also quite interested in the strengthening plan from a God."

It seemed like my manager also agreed. Well, there is a limit to how much strengthening can be done including my dragonification in a short span of time. I, Ravel and everyone else also knew about this. If that's the case, then I suppose there is no harm trying to follow the plan proposed by a God.

I've never directly talked to him and the only thing I knew about him was the fact that he was someone who really liked wars. But, it's also a fact that the calm Cao Cao and the first generation Sun Wukong surrendered themselves to him. If that's so, I would decide to bet with this small possibility.

"I understand. I am also quite interested in this 'Ocean of Milk'. I'll go there. I'll leave the rest to you guys."

Everyone nodded in response to my words. And, as everything had been decided, Nakiri said to everyone

"Well then, shall we go to [Belzebut]? Everyone, did you bring your mobile phones? Since the possession of a phone is a basic condition, for those of you who don't have one, please get one immediately. For those who don't know about phones, you can probably get one if you just ask Ajuka-san."

….A cell phone? [Belzebut] did somehow sound familiar though. Because there were several members who were confused, Nakiri continued

“---[Belzebut] is a game that Maou Ajuka Beelzebub-san created. The place that we are going to train at, is inside that game.”

I personally was also super interested in [Belzebut], but… the place that I’m going to is the Ocean of Milk. And with this, I went to the Ocean of Milk while the others went to start their training inside that game---.

Part 2

“I came here to pick you up.”

---The person who was sent by Sakra to the Hyoudou Residence was Cao Cao!

While being urged by Cao Cao, I went towards the underground room where the large transportation magic circle was. Cao Cao then prepared the Hindu transportation magic technique.

“To think that that you would come here. You are unexpectedly pretty busy, huh.”

After I said that, Cao Cao shrugged his shoulders.

“I am basically Sakra’s vanguard. If I am told to ‘do it’, then I have no choice but to do as he says.”

The Hero Faction team that was led by Cao Cao also continued to steadily gain stars in the Tournament. He still lost at times if the compatibility, and other factors were poor, but there were two Longinus Sacred Gear users in that team who had attained their Balance Breakers. Since Kantei (Guan Yu) was one of the members, their chance of winning was surely high. It was one of the veteran teams who were regarded as very likely to qualify for the main stage.

…Since the qualifiers were approaching to the final stage, even though it was Sakra’s order, for him to pick me up was…. Somehow, I felt bad for him.

It seemed like Cao Cao was done with the preparation and while binding the sign with both his hands, he yelled ‘Ha!’ energetically. The demonic transportation magic circle completely changed into a Hindu transportation magic circle. while causing a light vibration on the ground “Gogogogo”, a two-doored stone gate emerged from the floor! The stone gate had godly symbols engraved across the doors. Cao Cao then put both his hands on the doors and pushed them at once. Our side was flooded by the dazzling light from the other side of the opened gate. But, we didn’t know what was on the other side of the door because of the blinding light.

“Well, shall we go then?”

While being urged by Cao Cao I walked towards to the door as I tried to block the light with my hand.

--And, what lay ahead was a sandy beach.

I could hear the satisfying sound of the rippling water ‘Sa-sa-’. However, what was in front of my eyes, wasn’t a blue sea, but a vast, milky-white sea! What lay beyond the door was a sandy beach and a milky white sea! Guessing from the information beforehand, I understood that this was the said “Ocean of Milk”!

T-This is the Ocean of Milk huh~! It’s the colour of cooked rice! As if being pulled by the ocean, I ran into the beach, but all of a sudden---

“Yo---, Sekiryuutei.”

---And, someone called me from behind. When I turned back, there was an intimidating man standing there with short hair and round sunglasses, an aloha shirt, and a string of prayer beads around his neck.

---It's was Sakra!

I instinctively took distance from him as I prepared for battle, but when I realised 'Ha!', I released my fighting stance. …Because he always seemed to emit a violent intent from his body, I unconsciously got into a fighting stance. I then greeted him for the first time.

"S-Sakra….san! H-Hello."

He looked down with amusement at the frightened me.

"I didn't think that you would come-ze'''. Well, since you're here, just take it easy."

As he said that, he snapped his fingers and two wooden chairs suddenly appeared nearby. Sakra then sat in one of those chairs.

"Welcome to the Ocean of Milk. Now, please sit down."

The God of War urged me to sit on the chair.

…I sat down next to him anxiously. B-Because I had never directly talked to this God, I felt afraid, or rather didn't know how to deal with him…. After all, all we heard from Azazel-sensei was that he was someone who possessed a dangerous ideology.

---Thinking about that, and considering only the Tournament, I was told that he currently wasn't that dangerous because he might be able to fight Shiva-san… Honestly, because I heard nothing but bad things about him, I didn't know what kind of a God he was in reality. This was basically our first meeting. After sitting on the chair, Sakra said to Cao Cao who stood behind him.

"Cao Cao, please start the aforementioned preparations."

"All right, all right, the God who likes to order humans around."

In accordance with the Sakra's order, Cao Cao… held a bucket in his hands as he reached for the sky, and began to work on the sandy beach. What was he going to do? While I was carefully watching him, Sakra began to speak beside me.

"How's the tournament?"

The tournament, huh. It's a suitable topic for a God of War I suppose.

".....Well, there were times where I had fun and struggled, I guess."

After answering like that, Sakra laughed as he then said

"Since your next enemy is Typhon and the others, I am really envious, you know?"

Well, for a God who was a battle maniac, I was sure that he drooled at the thought of taking on my next opponent. They were all famous supernatural beings after all.

However, Sakra put his hand on his chin, and suddenly looked displeased.

“I am currently half-happy and half-appalled.”

“Appalled?”

“Right now, the God-class teams are withdrawing one after another right? That can’t be helped.”

Yes, it’s as Sakra said, since the middle stage of the preliminaries had ended, the teams with Gods were suddenly starting to either walk out or withdraw. This was what had changed among the teams participating in the tournament. It didn’t include all Gods, but the cultural, artistic, emotional, and all kinds of non-battle Gods were starting to decline one after another.

Sakra also said

“Well, other than the God-class beings, there are also some small-fries who withdrew.”

After getting into the middle stage, there were also many teams other than God-class beings who gradually withdrew, and it had progressively increased. Sakra then asked

“Do you know the reason behind their withdrawal? It’s simple. It’s the same reason as the small-fries. ---They became afraid of the super strong Devils and their kind and also the Longinus.”

When I peeped through the side of his glasses, his eyes were filled with disappointment. Sakra continued

“To Gods, Devils and unknown creatures are their biggest enemy. It’s even more troublesome in a way than the fight between good and evil Gods. In other words, those weak Gods became afraid of the guys who went on a rampage in the tournament. Maybe you didn’t feel it, but the fight between Vali Lucifer and Crom Cruach, the fight between Lucifer’s younger sister enveloped in Balor’s power and Fenrir, the power of the Devils and Longinus-class Sacred Gears has obviously reached even the Gods. And that has certainly shocked the Gods who haven’t gone to war in a while.”

That rumour certainly reached me too. The match between Rias’ team and Vali’s team had a strong impact on the supernatural beings. I was also hyped-up by the fight between a Heavenly Dragon and a legendary Evil Dragon. But, looking at that match, it’s only natural that one would feel afraid. Also, the fight between Fenrir who unleashed the power that was close to its prime and Sirzechs Lucifer’s younger sister, Rias, who was enveloped in Balor’s power, had an enormous impact on the higher-ups of every mythology.

“From there, a bunch of completely unexpected Devils came out and even that Asura God Mahabali was beaten. I laughed really hard, but there were also some Gods who couldn’t laugh after seeing that.”

As Sakra said, the mysterious devils who suddenly appeared yesterday --- it was not hard to imagine that those above us were surprised by how Balberith and the others were able to defeat the Prince of the Asura Gods.

---I didn’t think that people as strong as them would emerge in this era.

That was the answer of a God who responded to an interview for an information magazine of a certain mythology's publication. Moreover, there were also several Sacred Gear users who were starting to go on a rampage. The result was far different from what we had expected at the beginning of the tournament, where it seemed likely that they would've been the ones to be beaten. I personally felt that due to this international tournament which was open to all mythologies, various people and talented individuals who were completely unnoticed until this time prevailed and were starting to break into unknown territory.

Sakra then said

"Of course, the power of yours which harbours the infinite is also a threat to God-class beings. That power would surely be capable of blowing away an unskilful God."

I knew for a fact that my Infinity Blaster was seen as something dangerous by all teams. However, there was something complicated in this discussion that couldn't even be expressed with words.

"...The Gods became afraid and withdrew… huh" I mumbled quietly.

… When I became a Devil, I strongly believed that Gods were far-away beings and something that I couldn't possibly reach. Sakra then laughed ironically and said,

"Most of the God-class beings are. I am sure because they are gods, and because they are supernatural beings, they were swayed by the opportunity to participate in the tournament. On the contrary, what came out were the monsters of the new generation. Gods are mostly from a non-battle origin. For example, they only rule for good harvest and business. For gods like them, monsters like you give them nothing but fear."

Sakra then --- had a look of anguish in his eyes.

"...In the end, the remaining God-class beings are those who are battle-types, me included. Well, it's become pretty easy to understand. On the contrary, the truth is that I am appalled by the other gods. …In order to seal Trihexa, the strongest Gods of each mythology went there after all."

This god was… . I felt like there was only one thing that I understood from him. Sakra genuinely just loved fighting. I felt as though he was similar to Vali and Crom Cruach. No, he felt the same as them.

….Wait, all the men around me are like that! Why is it that I who love Oppai so much always end up hearing their opinion about wars so seriously!? Cao Cao looked like he had finished his work, so came to me who was troubled and said

"The preparations are almost complete."

Cao Cao's gaze was directed at a miniature plastic pool which sat in one corner of the sandy beach! So that bucket was to fill this pool huh!

Not only that, even the design of the Pool was…the "Chichiryuutei Oppai Dragon" one! It was character merchandise which had anime-like drawings on it. ...It was probably a sample sent by my House.

I could hear the splish-splash sounds of the milky seawater being carried over with

the bucket, time after time. The ones that were carrying the bucket were the seven orbs of Cao Cao's Balance Breaker. The seven orbs formed the shape of a hand and flew in the sky to carry the seawater-filled bucket back and forth.

… For him to use his Balance Breaker in such a way. Well, Cao Cao's Balance Breaker is a quiet one after all. I looked on in puzzlement as I watched the plastic pool that was being filled.

"B-By the way, what do I do in this Ocean of Milk?"

When I asked Sakra like that---.

"---Stir the Ocean of Milk."

I doubted my hearing after receiving such an answer.

"....Eh? Stirring the…Ocean of Milk?"

Stirring it!? The Ocean of Milk…this seawater? While I still felt confused, Sakra laughed.

"HAHAHA, your face became weird, you know? No, no, what I meant by stirring the Ocean of Milk is an ancient ceremony recorded in the Hindu mythology. If the Ocean of Milk were to be stirred by the Gods, a certain thing might be refined."

As he said that, Sakra took out a small bottle from his pocket containing a shining golden liquid.

"---The refined thing is a miracle drug called Amrita."

The miracle drug Amrita! Somehow, the name was like medicine that you'd feel grateful for! Sakra then continued while looking at the plastic pool.

"Well, it was originally done on a mythological scale, but…because I am only going to make your drink, we don't have to go that far. If it at least became a motivation then that's good. So rather than the entire ocean, just this kid's pool is enough."

After Cao Cao finished relaying the buckets, he moved onto the next stage. Cao Cao put various things into the pool. Sakra then started to explain

"First, put in all the plants here and that plant's seed. Furthermore, get the legendary giant turtle Kurma --- place its child in that pool."

Suddenly, near Sakra's feet, there was a turtle around fifty centimetres in size! There was a strange protrusion which grew on its back. As the turtle was prompted, it dived into the pool and sat in the centre.

Next, Sakra suddenly grabbed a snake that had been coiling itself on his back. Because its head looked like a dragon's, I was sure that it was an oriental dragon. Sakra then wrapped the dragon which he had caught by the head onto the pretursion which grew from the back of the turtle.

"If I wrap the Hindu dragon Vasuki around the thing that grows on the descendant of Kurma's back..."

After he finished wrapping the dragon around the turtle, Sakra motioned to pass the

head to me as he prompted.

“Now, the Sekiryuutei will hold the head and Cao Cao will hold the tail. ---And, pull it reciprocally.”

Following Sakra’s command, I held the head and Cao Cao held the tail.

“.....W-What is this?”

The situation had already evolved to the point that I was unsure of what to say. Sakra laughed excitedly

“HAHAHA, it’s as I said right? It’s the small version of the ‘Stirring the Ocean of Milk’. Now, don’t complain and pull.”

.... It seemed like we had no choice but to pull. The milky-white color of the seawater and the plants, that plant’s seed that was put into the pool, and in the centre of all of that was a turtle…where a snake-like dragon was wrapped around the turtle’s back was being pulled reciprocally between Cao Cao and I, and we made the turtle rotate sideways.

…When the atmosphere had become so strange that we couldn’t say anything, Cao-Cao sighed

“Really, because I was told to become Sekiryuutei’s partner, I obeyed his orders until now, but I didn’t expect that we would end up doing this… Being Sakra’s Vanguard is not something that you want to do.”

“I’m not sure but, I’m sorry. No, but seriously, I don’t understand anything.”

I had no choice but to apologize! Because! A place called the ‘Ocean of Milk’ sounded like it was perfect for me, and because I heard that he had a plan to strengthen me, I came here. But we ended up pulling this snake-shaped dragon! Was this really a mythological activity!? Was a miracle drug really going to be made!? I doubted it!

Sakra then yawned.

“Keep stirring for an hour or two, and it’ll be over once the colour darkens. Until then, I’ll sleep over there-ze.”

On the lush sandy beach by the Ocean of MIlk, Sakra began to take a nap while Cao Cao and I continued to pull the dragon---.

Well, it’s been nearly two hours Since Cao Cao and I started chatting and pulling the dragon….The seawater inside the pool --- the milky-white colour became more concentrated and there was a hint of gold, which gradually shone!

Amazing! Even though I was in a half-belief and half-doubt situation, the colour turned into gold!

Sakra woke up from his nap. He checked the situation inside the pool while yawning.

“OK OK. The color has changed nicely. The simple edition of Amrita is now done.”

A jar-like cup then appeared in Sakra’s hands. While filling the cup with the seawater

that was in the pool, he explained

“The original is said to be the miracle medicine of immortality. An effect that would make even a God feel grateful if they drink it. Because of that, the Hindu Gods had a war and fought over it a long time ago. That was a fun time. There was a big war over a single glass of milk, you know?”

Just because of a glass of milk, the Hindu Gods started a war….

The miracle medicine of immortality Amrita, huh. I didn’t know that a war had started because of this Ocean of Milk. Sakra then gave the cup to me, after my interest in the mythological event was piqued.

“Here, drink it.”

“Eh!? T-This, am I really going to drink it!? Me, being immortal!?”

I couldn’t help but feel surprised! No, he certainly did summon me here for this, but I didn’t think that I would come actually make the miracle drug of immortality! Certainly, if I became immortal, I could somehow do something even if my enemies were Gods, but…! While holding the cup in my hands, Sakra sighed as he looked at my bewildered expression.

“It’s the simple edition, so it doesn’t have that much of an effect, you know. If it had one, then the Gods would have fought over it again. As part of a treaty, we can’t make the real ones.”

Ah, so the ones that I just made didn’t have that much effect, huh. ...I was relieved but felt disappointed at the same time… Sakra then continued

“I said it right? If it became a motivation to you, then it’s enough.”

“Motivation huh. Somehow, you think that it seemed like all my power-ups were because I was motivated.”

I mumbled like that.

Just like Azazel-Sensei who was at the top of my list, all of the people who trained me always gave me problems, or even thrusted situations at me, all so that it would become a ‘motivation’ to me. The power that resided inside me was amazing, but because I myself was weak, a ‘motivation’ was required to bring the real power out, and I had experienced it many times.

Each time, my real power did come out, but…. Sakra then laughed

“Well, that’s the thing. Because you are ‘too weak’, every time you encounter a wall, you need something that would become a motivation for you to be able to break the wall.”

He was right on point! Yes, that’s right! Because I was born in a normal human environment, I needed some preparations to be able to use Ddraig and Ophis’ powers! However, Sakra added

“But, to be honest, I don’t understand any of the people who looked after you, starting from Azazel.”

“Don’t understand?”

“People like you should be B-ranked at best, but when you put your mind on it, you produced a triple S-level miracle of an unknown power release several times. No matter how skilled someone is as a supernatural researcher, I’m sure that they didn’t even know the exact cause. That’s why you have no choice but to rely on motivation to seek out your possibilities.”

… I see, that’s probably why Azazel-sensei always spoke about enhancing my power by feeling it. I mean, I got power-ups because of breasts, and even resurrected with Ophis and Great Red’s power. Even the leader of the Grigori had no choice but to admit that such strengthening methods could only be worked out by just feeling it. However, all the methods that sensei thrusted at me turned out pretty good. Really, I can’t say that it was anything but excellent, sensei. However, it wasn’t sensei this time, but Sakra.

“...So, this is what’s going to be my ‘motivation’ this time?”

While Sakra folded his glasses and tucked them into his breast pocket, he said

“When it comes to you, it’s all about breasts, breasts and more breasts. I am afraid that that’s what is going to help you achieve your power up next time. So, that’s why I called you here.”

“... Also, one last thing. ...Why did you choose to help me?” I asked

…That Heavenly Emperor who supposedly had a dangerous ideology did something to help me. Before this tournament began, if I had to choose, I would have thought that we were enemies. For him to help me here, it seemed like he was hiding something and I was afraid of it.

Sakra then bluntly said

“Huh, the reason is simple, you know? ---When we get matched up in the main stage, it won’t be enough with just your black armor, it’s just too boring. If we’re going to do it, I want to fight against you when you’re serious, and when you’re at your best, without feeling any burden. In order to accomplish that, I will even use myths if I have to.”

The eyes of the God of War known as Sakra were overflowing with fighting spirit. … This God was also one of the people around me who was a battle maniac!

“You might regret it, you know?”

I replied with an improper joke. Sakra then made a happy face that I had never seen before.

“You think that I would lose and feel regret? HAHAHA, that’s impossible. As long as I can fight against you until the end, I’m fine with losing, okay?”

This is the rumoured God of War Sakra, huh. A God who could even enjoy losing as long as he can fight seriously…. Indeed, even the way he thought about the Gods who quit in the middle of the tournament was different. Sakra and I confirmed each other’s will to fight. Sakra urged me with the cup in his hand. After taking a deep breath once, I prepared myself and drank the miracle medicine Amrita in one go.

...I drank it, but nothing happened. It tasted like usual medicine, although the essence was the milk itself. The way it slid down my throat wasn't bad either. Because it was seawater, I thought it was going to be salty….

"....Nothing's happening though?"

I said doubtfully. However, after Sakra had confirmed that I drank it, he turned around and seemed like he was trying to run away.

"Cao Cao, look out so he doesn't lose consciousness." said Sakra to Cao Cao.

...So I don't lose consciousness? What does he---.

It was right at that time when I stopped thinking---.

Dokun.

My chest pounded so hard --- that it couldn't be expressed in words, and I felt excruciating pain throughout my entire body.

"---G-Gaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!"

IT HURTSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS!

…What is this….!? Inside my head, my arms, my feet, the inside of my stomach, everything hurttttted…at an impossible level! I wasn't able to stand up… I collapsed on the spot, and tried to struggle against the pain!

"Arrrrrrrrrrrrrrrgggghhhhhhhhhhh! What is thisssssssssssssss!?"

I scratched my chest! M-My chest hurt….! My head too…. The pain was unbelievable….! Tears even began to overflow from my eyes, my nose became runny, and I even started to drool because of the extreme pain! Without looking back, Sakra said

"It's originally meant to be a God's drink after all. Even though you are from another mythology, it's surely a deadly poison if a Devil drinks that."

….D-Deadly poison….! ….This, Amrita's effect….it felt like my body would be torn apart…..!

However, this pain…I wasn't the only one who felt it.

[Guaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa! Kuh! T-That miracle medicine's effect is reaching me even though I reside in a Sacred Gear huh……! Nuooooooooo!]

Ddraig who resided in my Sacred Gear too….he also screamed! It seemed like that miracle medicine didn't only affect me, but also beings who were residing inside the Sacred Gear…..!

The screams and cries of both me and Ddraig echoed across the sandy beach which was surrounded by the calm ripples of the Ocean of Milk.

...As Ddraig and I suffered on the sandy beach...Sakra said one last thing.

"But, well, try to surpass it. It's only natural for you who was blessed by breasts, right?"

...Because of the extreme pain, I almost lost consciousness, but I desperately tried to stop that from happening…

It felt as though I was sinking towards the bottom of an eternal vortex of extreme pain---

Part 3

I — Kiba Yuuto, together with the rest of Rias Gremory's team and Ise-kun's team (along with Roygun Belphegor-san) came to a certain place.

—A vast prairie spread out before my eyes with an endless blue sky hovering above it. It was neither Japan nor any other country, and also not the Underworld.

A green bar was displayed above my comrades' heads and mine. The reason was simple. It was because this was not reality, but a fake space that was prepared for a [Game]. Yes, Ajuka Beelzebub-sama kindly provided us with this new training space. This world…it was a part of the [Game] called [Beelzebut]. The one who guided us here was the newcomer to Ise-kun's team — Nakiri-kun, who held his phone in one hand as he touched the screen.

"Originally, I would use a cellphone to explore what's in this world, but since you guys are all guests and not legitimate players, I will make that part simpler."

Ouryuu-kun (along with Millarca-san who wasn't here this time) knew the details about this [Game] called [Beelzebut], since it seemed as though Beelzebub-sama had given them some work here.

What he taught us beforehand was

The player is oneself, not an avatar (character inside the game) The field we were going to play on was a fake game field created by a servant of Beelzebub-sama. The players will be teleported from the human realm to play with their own body. Inside [Beelzebut], you can access the game's system by using a cellphone (including smartphones). And those were the explanations. Nakiri-kun began to explain what he meant by accessing the game's system by using a cellphone.

"For example, when you want to learn magic that enables you to know about your opponent's information or skills, you point your cellphone at your opponent."

Nakiri-kun held his cellphone up and pointed it at Xenovia.

"After that, open the picture mode. And if you invoke the magic or skill—"

A picture of Xenovia was displayed on Nakiri's smartphone. The word [Guest] was displayed above her head, and there was also a detailed numerical display of her current HP and status (good).

[Ooh!]

Everyone who looked at the screen was astonished. Nakiri-kun then pointed his smartphone away from everyone.

"Next is magic. After selecting the area by framing it on your phone…if you push this button…"

A burst of flames spread out in front of Nakiri-kun.

After framing the area with the camera, the shown environment became engulfed as

the flame magic was invoked. Nakiri then said.

“When you want to use a ranged attack, use the camera like this, and you can attack or recover the area that is shown. Well, you can still use magic without having to point the camera though. There are also times when irregular magic is used over a large area, like freezing or petrification. Also, this is going to be beneficial if you guys know—”

He took out a plastic bottle that was filled with juice, and put it in front of him so that he could frame it within the screen of his smartphone.

‘Click’ after taking the photo of the bottle—. That plastic bottle became enveloped in light and was attracted towards Nakiri-kun’s smartphone. The plastic bottle that was in front of him earlier had now completely vanished. Nakiri-kun then showed us his smartphone screen. There appeared to be an items menu, where the item [Juice x1] was displayed.

“You can store things like this in your cell phone by capturing it, because your cell phone also acts as an item box. Thus, in [Beelzebut], a cell phone is needed to be able to do a lot of things.”

And with that, we received a simple explanation from him. Some of our comrades who weren’t used to cell phones were struggling a little bit. The hardest thing was to teach Crom Cruach so that he doesn’t destroy the phone. It was unexpected that His Eminence Strada instantly grasped and understood the [Beelzebut] system.

“Fufufu, the latest technology sure is valuable. Even with my smartphone, I’m starting to become fond of social network games.”

Gasper looked at His Eminence’s phone screen and exclaimed in surprise

“Amazing, you have so many 5-star characters!”

….His Eminence Strada sure did a great job of astonishing us.

Shirone-chan A.K.A Koneko-chan and Xenovia, seemed familiar with [Beelzebut], so they taught those who didn’t understand the system. It seemed like Koneko-chan and Xenovia had registered as players beforehand via Nakiri-kun and Millarca-san (a classmate and member of the student council) since it looked like they already knew about this [Game] to a certain extent. Koneko-chan was the type that liked games after all.

The one who struggled the most at understanding the system was Bova-san. Because his body was so big, he had to turn into a mini dragon to operate his cell phone.

“…..I don’t understand this part.”

“Hmm, this part is like this.”

Nakiri-kun gave him his undivided attention as he taught him. It seemed like the relationship between the Sekiryuutei’s fang and fist was good. While receiving guidance on how to operate a cell phone, Bova-san said

“We can only thank you for letting us train in this place too.”

Nakiri then answered

“It’s not only Gremory-senpai’s team and us, but everyone who is related to the counter-terrorist team [DxD] can train here. So far as it goes, Ajuka-san said that this special training space is an area that has just been added to the game. It also seems like the other [DxD] members have already started”.

Well, that means that Sitri Team, Sairaorg-san and Seekvaira Agares-san’s teams, Vali’s team and the reincarnated Angels too were going to train here.

While looking at the vast green fields, Irina-san asked Nakiri-kun

“Is it safe here?”

“According to Ajuka-san — [It can’t be said as certain. —However, the security here is ten times better than the space they were using. And no matter how flashy you train, it can’t be destroyed. That’s why I want you to rest assured] was what I heard.”

The security was better than the space in the Gremory territory, huh. Even though the security of the space there was pretty high too. But, if this place was really created by the current Beelzebub’s servant, it must be safer than the place we trained at.

…Although, we did have some lingering attachments to that place. After all, my comrades and I supported each other and worked hard together in that place. I also did some practice battles with Ise-kun there. I am sure that Ise-kun thinks the same. Nakiri-kun then gave us the last explanation

“—And, well, there are systems and all of that, but it seems that this place that Ajuka-sama has prepared for us has been designed so that it doesn’t differ too much from ordinary space. You can also suppress the game-like damage notation, and use your abilities like normal. The system doesn’t interfere that much either. You should be able to train like usual. However, please always bring your phone and don’t let your smartphone be separated from you.”

Although it was a field in the [Beelzebut] game, I guess we could still train as usual. We were grateful.

“For now, everyone please try to do your usual training by yourself.”

“We should start too.”

Rias-oneesan and Ravel-san instructed their respective teams as the training session began.

And with this, we, Rias Gremory’s team + Ise-kun’s team underwent a joint training session inside [Beelzebut].

—And, while getting used to the game’s system everyone trained on their own. The area prepared for us to train was not only a grassy field, but there were also forests, mountains, and lakes, plus an underground dungeon and a castle, and even a floating island. We were surprised by the fact that the vastness of this field created in another dimension was as big as the Kantou region[121]. The real [Beelzebut] was even larger than this, as it was said to be as large as the Australian continent. Just in case, so that we don’t get in contact with the players that were playing in the original

game, a special wall was built around the training ground. Because the players there didn't know a thing about supernatural beings, surely meeting Devils, Angels, and Dragons would just create chaos. Everyone was told to train wherever they wished to by Rias-oneesan and Ravel-san, but because the field was too big, they were also told at the same time to do it in a nearby place so they didn't get lost. Well, it also seems like it was designed so that we won't get lost even if we go far away…

It was now a quick break time, and the place that we all teleported to — was our starting point. Everyone in the Rias Gremory team and Ise-kun's team gathered and relaxed on the grassy field as they shared their opinions with each other. Xenovia, Irina-san, and Asia-san then chatted as they pleased

"Even though it's an artificial place, the mountains sure are nice."

"You can go by flying or even climb them directly"

"But, I sure am beat up…. The scenery of the mountains was the best though."

It seemed like there were also some others who went into the mountains.

"It was so vast that I unconsciously followed paisen and Your Eminence to climb the mountain."

"Fufufu, it sure was a great training place."

It seemed like Lint-san and His Eminence Strada also climbed the mountain together.

"It seems like an environment that wouldn't pose any problems even if you did go on a rampage. It's a forgiving environment even for Dragons huh, son of Tannin."

"Y-Yeah, that's ri-…ght…."

Said Crom Cruach and Bova-san. It seemed like Crom Cruach who acted as a substitute for Ise-kun had caused the giant body that Bova-san was proud of, to become very ragged and exhausted. While everyone deepened their relationships as fellow Gremory peerage members, they found their own ways of training in this big field.

I trained at the riverbank as I was trying to get used to the game. I felt that the scenery was quite different. There was nothing in the space that was in the Gremory territory's basement after all. We were able to concentrate because of the nothingness, but on the other hand, it was also a rather refreshing way to train because of the scenery.

—And, while looking at the grassy field, Rias-oneesan said

"From what I heard, Ajuka-sama's [Game] is a reference to another [Game]."

"The main reference point is the system, or so I heard. Something to do with using a cell phone primarily. However, that [Game] doesn't exist here." continued Nakiri-kun.

Everyone looked at Nakiri-kun. He then continued to speak

"The [Game] that [Belzebut]'s concept is based on is something produced by a certain Sacred Gear."

As if interrupting him, Roygun Belphegor-san then said

“—[Innovate Clear], right? One of the Longinus.”

Nakiri-kun was surprised by Roygun’s words and nodded.

“Yes, [Innovate Clear] is an ability that enables the user to create an ideal world in another dimension…that’s its normal ability.”

“So it’s like [Dimension Lost], huh.” said Xenovia.

Nakiri then responded

“It might look alike, but there is one thing that is clearly different. It’s the fact that [Innovate Clear] can create even living things in that world. It’s a Longinus capable of creating a fake universe.”

…Even living things could be produced if it’s in the world created by the user of the Sacred Gear… I had heard a bit about the Sacred Gear’s ability, but…

“So the ability of the [Sacred Gear that lets impersonate God] that we heard in the human world is real, huh.” said Crom Cruach while eating a banana.

“It seems like it captured the best parts of both [Dimension Lost] and [Annihilation Maker].” murmured Irina-san.

“However, there are of course conditions. The living things created can only live in that world,” explained Nakiri-kun.

Indeed, even if it’s a Longinus, it must have some kind of minus point. …Of course, it’s a different story if it’s a Balance Breaker though. Roygun-san asked Nakiri

“You are currently investigating [Innovate Clear] and also [Telos Karma] right?”

…Roygun Belphegor-san seemed like she knew the details of that information. Though we did hear rumors that she had several informants working under her… Nakiri nodded in response to Roygun-san’s question.

“[Telos Karma] is a Longinus that’s capable of creating choices that aren’t possible forcibly.”

Roygun-san said as she put her hand on her chin.

“The thirteenth Longinus…is said to be heretical, or a Longinus crowned with the forbidden number. Anyway, the rumours that I heard are mostly bad.”

Yes, I also didn’t hear a lot of good things about [Telos Karma]. It’s also the cause for it to be mentioned in legends. Nakiri-kun then picked up a stone from the ground and pointed it at Xenovia.

“For Example, if I threw this rock to Prez Xenovia, I think there are a lot of possibilities that could occur. She could repel it, dodge it, cut it, get hit by it, and other possibilities.”

“It won’t hit. I can do at least that much, y’know?” answered Xenovia.

Nakiri-kun then said “That might be true if it’s the president”, before continuing

“Simply by throwing this rock at someone, a variety of possibilities are generated. That Longinus is capable of creating the choices that are impossible. It can cause something like — the [Beelzebut] system suddenly experiencing a failure that only affects President Xenovia’s surroundings that makes her unable to react to the stone that I threw, and she gets hit.”

Ravel-san then said

“…I heard that it can turn the possibility of a phenomenon into an unexpected occurrence…”

Nakiri-kun said as he dropped the stone on his hand.

“In human history, there are some things or phenomena that are impossible to explain, right? Even after history has changed drastically, historians and researchers still can’t give an answer as to how things became that way. That’s because [Telos Karma] supposedly took part in some of those occurrences.”

A Longinus that took part in some of the historical events in Japan and Europe—.

Nakiri-kun then added

“That’s why [Telos Karma] is also known as [History Breaker].”

This Longinus was said to be a different type of ‘dangerous’ from the other high-class Longinus by all mythologies. Consequently, it seemed like the user’s whereabouts had always been searched for, but… The first one who found that person — no, the first one who came in contact with that person was Ajuka Beelzebub-sama.

Rias-oneesan then murmured.

“The Longinus which doesn’t have detailed information about its Balance Breaker confirmed yet was [Telos Karma] right?”

“I don’t even want to imagine the Balance Breaker of a Sacred Gear that could change the course of history.” said Xenovia who seemed exhausted.

Nakiri-kun spoke with a scary expression.

“[Innovate Clear] and [Telos Karma], these two are currently together. Now, guess what will happen when these two Longinus get together. The answer is— [The Worst]. The world created by [Innovate Clear], and the many impossible choices made to become occurrences there by [Telos Karma]. Products that could be considered miracles to deeds done by a Devils, and a lot of impossible things can happen at an impossible time.”

Bova-san asked

“But, in the world of [Innovate Clear], [Telos Karma] controls the fate right? The user of that Sacred Gear would probably feel as arrogant as God in their actions.”

Nakiri-kun — made a bitter expression.

“….Yeah, that’s right, Bobo. That’s why that person was named [The man who impersonates God]”

Nakiri-kun's expression showed clearly that he was more concerned with the user rather than the Sacred Gear's abilities.

Xenovia asked

"Ouryuu, you know about the person who holds both of those Longinus, right?"

"…Yes, for once. He is a dangerous man. …He envies to see the despair of this world more than anyone else. Ajuka-san evaluated him as Hyoudou-senpai's exact opposite."

The unusually hateful Nakiri-kun spoke about that man, but…. A being who is the exact opposite of Ise-kun, huh. I am really interested, but…even though he is not showing his presence nearby, I can somehow feel a dangerous air that I had never felt before. While the atmosphere got heavier, Akeno-san then suggested

"Let's stop this talk and eat, shall we?"

As she said that, she created a magic circle and made picnic sets appear. There were more than ten sets of heavy boxes which were stacked three levels tall, and there were also more than ten picnic baskets. There were also several soup jars, and Akeno-san opened one of them and pour them into mugs. The tasty aroma tickled our nostrils. My stomach began to feel empty. Because I'd been eating the food that Akeno-san cooked since middle school, even by smelling the aroma, my stomach became completely empty. Gasper-kun and Koneko-chan's stomachs growled. Because they had also been eating Akeno-san's cooking, it was only natural that they became like that.

Akeno-san passed a soup-filled mug to Koneko-chan

"Here, Shirone-chan. Now now, everyone too please eat."

The heavy atmosphere was blown away by Akeno-san's picnic set, and from there everyone started to eat. While chewing my onigiri, I apologized to Ise-kun in my heart. It was because we were having a picnic while leaving him out. I was sure that if he knew, he would scream "Bring me along too!". On top of that, he had been interested in [Belzebut] until he went to the Ocean of Milk too… If he knew about the [Game]'s system and vastness of the field, I was sure that he would get fired up.

After taking a bite of her sandwich, Rias-oneesan said as she looked at the sky.

"Ise, I wonder what you're doing right now?"

And the girls suddenly gazed into the sky like Rias-oneesan. The Ocean of Milk that was somewhere. I was sure they were thinking about Ise-kun who was there.

Ravel then said

"I am sure, for the sake of the team, for the sake of Rias-sama, and for the sake of getting Rossweisse-sama back from Vidar-sama, I am sure that he is training desperately right now."

Rossweisse-san blushed upon hearing those words.

"F-For me…huh?"

Rias-oneesan put her hand on top of Rossweisse-san's hand while smiling

"That's right. He also forcibly took me back that time. That person is like that after all. He will find a way to settle it even if it costs his life. You too have experienced it right?"

Rias-oneesan was talking about the Auros Academy incident. That time too, Ise-kun saved Rossweisse-san from Euclid Lucifugus. And the other girls continued

"I have also been saved several times. When I arrived in Japan, during the fight against Astaroth, and also another times." Said Asia-san.

"Me too, when I was captured by [Khaos Brigade]'s wizard — Nilrem, I was saved by him. He immediately came to me." continued Ravel.

Koneko-chan and Gasper raised their hands.

"…..That time, Gasper-kun and I were saved too. Well, he also protected us from the Grim Reapers."

"I-I, that time was like that too, but he has been looking after me since we met! He also took care of Valerie!"

"Ufufu, that's right. Hyoudou Issei-san is really dependable," affirmed Valerie.

Xenovia-san and Irina-san were confused by the girls' talk.

"… I should try to get kidnapped once too, shouldn't I. I am also a girl, I also want to be a kidnapped princess. …Well, it doesn't suit me though."

"A kidnapped princess! …Somehow, it sounds romantic, right!? I-I want darling to come to save me!"

"No-, Irina and I were born on the battlefield, so as expected, being a princess is a bit too much."

"I am a maiden too! I want to be a princess! No, I can be!"

"But you know, Irina. You can't say that you have never lifted anything heavier than fork now, right? You have been swinging your holy sword around in front of your future husband, you know…"

"If that's the case, I've never lifted anything heavier than my Holy Sword."

"……..Irina, sometimes you are really dumb."

It seemed like the warrior girls had something on their mind. But, I don't think Ise-kun cares about that though. Because he will always come to save the girl he likes. On the side, Elmenhilde seemed rather interested as she held a notepad in her hands.

"And, if we show something like a kidnapped princess, it's effective to Hyoudou Issei-sama—. Although the princess part is cleared, the kidnapped condition is…there must be an enemy…. I-Is it possible that he will fight if there is a marriage partner….? D-Did I have a fiance?…."

And, while writing with the pen, Lint-san too wrote something in her notepad.

“I see I see, so girls who are born on the battlefield struggle with getting men quite a bit. But but, it means that paisens won’t have a partner in the fu…. Or rather, I don’t know if they can fall in love with men. They lack training, huh.”

No matter where girls are born, love talk will always capture the girls’ attention. Akeno-san said to Rossweisse-san

“He also saves me all the time. That’s why, you must properly tell him with your mouth too, Rossweisse-san.”

“Must tell him with my mouth…?”

Akeno-san clearly answered Rossweisse-san’s question

“About the marriage interview. How you feel, and what your feelings are right now. Please tell him about that.”

Rossweisse-san seemed to understand what Akeno-san meant, and she put her hands over her chest while looking a bit sad.

“….My current feelings….”

His Eminence Strada who was looking at this while eating the meat of some fried chicken off the bone said,

“This is youth. Absolutely beautiful.”

Crom Cruach who was also eating some fried chicken off the bone murmured “I don’t understand”. Despite the girls talk, we ended our picnic and started our training again.

Part 4

I, Hyoudou Issei felt like I fell into a dreamy place.

…I remembered that after drinking the miracle drug Amrita, I felt the pain that struck me as if it wanted to tear my body apart.

…But, there's no pain now. …Is there any chance that…I am…dead?

No, even if Devils die, it's not like they can go to Heaven… I somehow barely kept my consciousness awake. Suddenly, I heard a voice.

[—pai—gon—ear—me]

The sounds gradually became clearer.

[Oppai Dragon, can you hear me?]

…I can hear you, but this voice is…. Who are you?

[I am one of the pillar Gods who live in a world called [Evie × Etoulde]. Everyone calls me Chichigami here.]

—Chichigami.

……

……..

…….What do you meannnnnnnnnnnnn!? After floating in this dreamy place, I suddenly heard a voice, and now there's someone who goes by the name of Chichigami!? What in the world happened to my body!?

[Calm down, Oppai Dragon. Previously, the spirit that I used as an intermediary should now have come in contact with you.]

T-There sure was a time when something like that happened during the incident where Loki attacked!

[This time, it seems like I am able to directly talk to you.]

Why!? How!?

[I am not really sure, but your breast powers have gained a trace of divine nature, thus allowing your consciousness to reach.]

It might also be due to the effect of Amrita….

[Oppai Dragon, I don't have much time. I have to tell you about something.]

W-What is it?

[In the near future, a malevolent being will come to your world. You have to gather certain things in order to defeat that malevolent being.]

M-Malevolent being? Things I have to gather?

[Look.]

Ah! I wasn't really sure, but there were lots of breasts floating in the sky! O-On top of that, I remembered seeing this somewhere before! F-From the right, Rias' oppai, Akeno-san's oppai, Xenovia's, Irina's oppai, Asia's oppai, Shirone a.k.a Koneko-chan's small oppai, and Kuroka's oppai! —Wait, I know all of these oppai!

[That's right. Those are the [Chosen Heavenly Breasts]]

—[Chosen Heavenly Breasts]!

What a…dumb phrase! You can even go nuts just by hearing its name!

[You have to gather all twelve pairs of the [Chosen Heavenly Breasts]. Right now, you already have seven pairs. Gather the remaining five pairs.]

Why!? How!? By what means!?

[I've said it before. Those [Chosen Heavenly Breasts] will be important when you meet the malevolent being. And, as to how to gather them, I am sure you already know about that.]

What the hell!? What's this malevolent being thing and the [Chosen Heavenly Breasts]!?

[It looks like time is up. I will not be able to get in contact with you for a while. Please gather the twelve Heavenly Breasts, all right?]

It's not all rightttttt! Give me more explanation, please! And did you get in contact with me to just tell me that!?

[The Oppai Dragon song, I like it, you know?]

I didn't ask that! What was that!? Why right now!?

[Well then, goodbye.]

Ah—, the voice is fadinggg! Uhh! A dazzling light enveloped me—-.

"You up?"

When I opened my eyes, I saw — Cao Cao's face.

…He was trying to look into my face. After sitting up, I turned my head around.

…I saw…a bizarre and weird dream…

"How long have I been unconscious?"

I asked Cao Cao.

"You lost your consciousness for more than a day. Unexpectedly, you came back really fast though. And thanks to that, you are going to make it to the match."

"…I see"

…Even though it was only that dream, it took about a day huh.

“And, how do you feel?”

Asked Cao Cao. I urged the power that was sleeping inside me as I clenched my fist

“Nope, I don’t feel like anything has changed…”

I don’t think that there was any change to the power itself. My demonic energy and my dragon’s power, I didn’t feel like anything had changed after drinking the Amrita. Ah, however, I felt like my head was clearer right now. It was like the clear-headed feeling after a good sleep had increased…

However, Ddraig said

[Partner, it seems like some kind of effect has been applied to the Sacred Gear. Let’s investigate for a while.]

I did as Ddraig said and focused on my Sacred Gear.

……..

…T-This is!

“—! … Hahaha, this is amazing. It’s a simple effect, but it might be enough.”

Amazing! I just got the effect that I hoped for most! Amrita sure is incredible! With this, I’m definitely indebted to Sakra! …I should pay a visit to Shibamata Taishakuten Temple. The change was literally so immense that even I considered that!

I see, rather than my body, the effect actually went to the Sacred Gear, huh. I was glad that it didn’t end with just that weird dream. As he looked at my condition, Cao Cao laughed

“It seems like it worked. Let’s tell Sakra later. ”

—And, I suddenly turned my gaze over to the Ocean of Milk. I could hear the calming sounds of the waves. …The waves sure made me feel comfortable. I sat in a zen position on the sand. I then asked Cao Cao

“How long should I stay here?”

“Until Sakra comes back, I guess,” replied Cao Cao.

“Well, until then please let me do this.”

When I said that — he also sat in zen-style position beside me.

“Ha, I’ll tag along.”

Until Sakra returned, we gazed upon the Ocean of Milk as we sat in a zen-style position.

…After drinking Amrita in the Ocean of Milk, I saw Chichigami in a dream, and heard about the Heavenly whatever it was… Well, I should pull myself together and focus on the match. Because from now, even if I cry or laugh, I’m going to fight against the strongest opponent that I’ll have ever faced—.

Notes

1. it's one of Sakra's speech mannerisms

2. The Kantō region (関東地方 Kantō-chihō) is a geographical area of Honshu, the largest island of Japan.[3] The region includes the Greater Tokyo Area and encompasses seven prefectures: Gunma, Tochigi, Ibaraki, Saitama, Tokyo, Chiba, and Kanagawa.

Balberith & Verrine

The Underworld — in the territory of a certain Maou in the Devil's world was a village that had been established for the players in the International Rating Game Tournament. The "Black Satan of Darkness Dragon King" Team's lodging house was in one corner. In the room for the players, the jade-haired Verrine looked like she was watching the recording of a match on the TV with a bored expression.

"Hey, Balberith. What do you think Hades-sama wants to do by making us participate in this tournament?"

The bronze-haired young man who was reading a folklore book [The Red and White Dragon] behind her was — Balberith.

"…I don't know. It seems like he wanted to cause a miracle by having us clash with the Two Heavenly Dragons, but…to be honest, I doubt their strength is better than the Asura Gods."

Verrine then said as she lied down

"Anyway, our current goal is to make the chosen Sonneillon and Gressil as strong as Balberith and I in this tournament."

After reading the book, he put it down on top of a pile of books as he looked at another book with the word [Ouroboros] written on its cover.

"… Hey, Verrine. I want to fight Ophis and the like."

"Well, the Two Heavenly Dragons might be the best right now. It's said that Ophis is currently under heavy protection."

"… As expected, the Two Heavenly Dragons, huh."

Balberith then looked at a book with the title [Parent and Child] in the stack of books.

"Verrine, if our mother is Lilith, then who is our father?"

Verrine who seemed uninterested answered

"Hmm, I don't know? Hades-sama? But, Hades-sama looks like he hates Devils and I am sure that we are just pawns to him. Well, as long as it's fun, I am fine with that."

"No, Hades-sama clearly denied and said that he is not our father. That means, he is not our father."

"You want a father, Balberith?"

As the young man who was both her brother and her partner said those weird things, Verrine also unconsciously asked that.

"Verrine, you don't need a father?"

"I don't know. I do want a big brother though."

"Then, I will be your big brother."

Verrine laughed as her brother said that with a serious expression.

“Hahaha, judging by who was born first, I am the older one, you know?”

“I see, so I am the little brother.”

Balberith even took that joke seriously. He then closed his eyes as he put his hands on his chest and said

“For me who was born with this power, I am really curious about the uncertainty of birth. Whose child am I, and why was I born into this world. …If my transcendent father really exists, he must be someone with supernatural powers and abilities fit to be my father.

“Well, will you search for your father?”

Verrine asked that as she drank the sweet coffee that was almost like a sugary syrup.

“Searching for my father, huh…”

Verrine realized that Balberith had understood something from the word just now.

Vidar

The land where the Asgardian Gods lived — Asgard. Vidar's secret retreat sat in the outskirts of Asgard. In the living room of that hideout, Vidar was drinking alcohol, the new chief God of Olympus, Apollon appeared. As they sat facing each other, Apollon started

"Vidar, I hear that you are going to be married…have you become serious?"

"Nope, I have no intention of making Göndul's granddaughter my bride, you know."

The tipsy Vidar-san replied as he spun the glass. Apollon looked puzzled as asked once again

"Then, why?"

"It seems like that drunk Valkyrie's relationship with the Sekiryuutei isn't going anywhere, so I thought I'd give a little boost to the Sekiryuutei and the Valkyrie."

After hearing his real intention, Apollon sighed.

"What a whimsical thing to do."

Vidar then laughed mischievously

"It seems like my father caused them lots of problems, you know. When you think about all of the people who keep bugging me to get married and consider [DxD], which of them is better?"

"Ha."

Apollon laughed at his friend's frankness. In short, the second generation Chief God himself picked up the role of being a cupid for the Sekiryuutei and the Valkyrie.

"What's with that scornful laugh?"

"I suppose the prodigal prince has finally become somewhat Chief God-like, you know."

Vidar-san raised his voice

"I don't want to hear that from someone who only pursues art like you. ….It's because my eldest brother Baldur went to the Isolation Barrier Field with my father, you know. I thought that I must succeed this role and not live freely as I am now. I don't know if this is what they call the fate of Gods."

"But, the battle is a different topic, right?"

Vidar-san who was spinning the ice inside the glass looked happy upon hearing Apollon's question.

"Yes, certainly. —Fighting with the Sekiryuutei is valuable after all."

Yes, while it was true that Vidar-san took on the role of being a cupid for the Sekiryuutei and the Valkyrie, it was also a fact that he wanted to take advantage of

Sekiryuutei's passion. That was because the Sekiryuutei's power was the one that would be felt more than anything else.

—This God was also charmed by the power of the Heavenly Dragons.

Vidar then poured alcohol into the empty glass and handed it to Apollon. Apollon said as he held the glass in one of his hands.

"We intend to win, right?"

"It's only natural that we would win."

"Well, what will you do after winning the match? Will you be engaged?"

What will happen to the Valkyrie…. If Vidar wins the match? Apollon was also interested in this. While Vidar drank more alcohol, he tilted his head in thought, and then said

"…I will find fault with her and return her to Sekiryuutei."

And so that was the answer. In short, no matter if he won or lost, he had no intention of making her his bride in the very least. This man was someone who had no interest in somebody else's girlfriend. However, the opponent that this man had his eyes on was the one who would suffer

"Hmm. That's terrible, for both you and the Sekiryuutei who is at your mercy too."

Vidar made a bitter expression in response to Apollon's words as if he had a reason.

"…I, do I look like my father? I don't like that…,"

Team member I

Sekiryuutei of the Blazing Truth
Team members registered

King	---	Hyoudou Issei
Queen	---	Bina Lessthan
Rook	---	Nakiri Kouchin Ouryuu
Rook	---	Roygun Belphegor
Knight	---	Xenovia Quarta
Knight	---	Shidou Irina
Bishop	---	Asia Argento
Bishop	---	Rossweisse
Pawn x2	---	Ravel Phoenix
Pawn x3	---	Bova Tannin
Pawn x2	---	Elmenhilde Karnstein

The Leisure of the Kings
Team members registered

King	---	Typhon
Queen	---	Apollon
Rook x2	---	Vidar
Knight	---	Brynhildr (Valkyrie Squad/Squad Leader)
Knight	---	Midgardsormr

Bishop x2	**–––**	**Artemis**
Pawn x2	**–––**	**Helmwige (Valkyrie Squad/Squad Member)**
Pawn x2	**–––**	**Ortlinde (Valkyrie Squad/Squad Member)**
Pawn x2	**–––**	**Grimgerde (Valkyrie Squad/Squad Member)**
Pawn x2	**–––**	**Schwertleite (Valkyrie Squad/Squad Member)**

Life.3
The Battle at Yggdrasil

Part I

After returning from the [Ocean of Milk] and [Beelzebut], we reported to each other.

[Beelzebut] was the game that was created by Beelzebub-sama! I became really excited and wanted to try to train there just by hearing the name of that seemingly interesting world. Anyway, would it be possible to ask Beelzebub-sama and Nakiri-kun to let me try to play in the original game? The idea of playing in a world as vast as the Australian continent with our own bodies seemed so fascinating!

---And, after reporting about what happened at the 'Ocean of Milk'...everyone made a doubtful face as if there was a question mark on top of their heads. Although…the story of me meeting the Chichigami was taken seriously. Well, it was because Chichigami did bless me with divine protection during the fight against Loki after all. Everyone had high hopes for the Longinus' outcome that was released by stirring the Ocean of Milk. I mean, right now, I was sure that the key for the next match was going to be that outcome itself.

In order to prepare for tomorrow's match, every member of the [Sekiryuutei of the Blazing Truth] Team went to bed early after doing everything that had to be done. As I returned to my room and dove into bed, I wondered if I was going to sleep while burying my face in between Rias' oppai---.

"G-Good evening..."

The person who sat and was waiting in the bed for me was --- Rossweisse-san! O-On top of that, she wore revealing lingerie…. I was touched by her shyness as she tried to hide her nipples that could be seen through the revealing dress with her hands! There was no one else but Rossweisse-san on my bed. Usually, Rias and Asia would be here, sometimes Akeno-san too, and there were also times when Xenovia and Irina would barge into my room, but…

Since the proposal, they had been fighting over who would sleep with me, and the number of people who slept on my bed just kept rising. Often times I would also be on the floor when I woke up. It was mainly because I was kicked off by Xenovia who frequently turned over while sleeping though…. And because of that, we were considering the purchase of a larger bed. ...No, it would be pretty hard to find a bed that could fit seven to eight people! As expected, I think the most a bed can fit is four people! Personally, I think that three people sleeping next to each other is the best!

As I thought about such things….I asked Rossweisse-san

“U-Umm, are Rias and Asia not here?”

Rossweisse-san nodded in response to my question

“I heard that R-Rias-san has things to do back home and she will be staying there with Akeno-san. A-Asia-san said that she wants to deepen her relationship with Xenovia and Irina-san, so they will be sleeping together….”

Ah-, I see. Rias is also busy and I am sure that Asia wants to sleep with her friends

while chatting for the sake of tomorrow's match. There were also times like that.

---And with that, tonight I would be sleeping with Rossweisse-san, just the two of us. Somehow, I felt so nervous. I was used to sleeping with two people beside me, and sometimes even more, but right now it was only the two of us! Also, my partner is Rossweisse-san! Normally, she would take the initiative to not participate in these sort of things.

The fidgety Rossweisse-san blushed as she asked

"...A-Are you not going to come over?"

"I-I am coming!"

After replying like that, I hastily walked over to the bed and lied down. Rossweisse-san was going to stay here for the night. And then, there was silence. …. At times like these, Rias would say

[Now, Ise. Let's go to sleep, shall we? Ara, you want to sleep while burying your face in between my breasts? It's okay, come here.]

Or something like that and spoil me as much as I want, but I don't know about that when it came to Rossweisse-san! My heart beat really fast because I had never experienced anything like this with Rossweisse-san! When I took a glimpse --- my eyes met hers as she faced me while lying on the bed! At the same time, I unconsciously looked at the… pink tips of her nipples that were visible from her see-through lingerie! Rossweisse-san then said to me

"...What should I do in order to refuse the engagement? I thought about it, you know, and the easiest way would be to establish the fact with Ise-kun."

……

E-E-E-E-E-E-E-Establish the fact!? Y-You mean, in other words, doing this and that!

What came to my mind was the engagement incident with the Phoenix House a year ago, and the time when Rias approached me! T-That was amazing! I really thought that I would do it with Rias….just like that!

A-And, now Rossweisse-san too….? I gulped as Rossweisse-san continued

"...But, I thought that if I don't believe in Ise-kun, then those things won't happen," said Rossweisse-san from the bottom of her heart.

Rossweisse-san then held my hand and distinctly told me

"I don't want to…marry Vidar-sama. I…want to be by your side"

"...Will you snatch me away from Vidar-sama?" asked Rossweisse-san with teary eyes.

I --- replied with a serious expression as I grasped her hand in return.

"The problem isn't whether I snatch you away or not. From the very beginning, I didn't have any intention of handing you over to anyone, you know? During the incident with Euclid as well, I realised that I wasn't going to hand you over to him.

This only means that I'll have to do it again."

I hugged Rossweisse-san as my emotions built up

"I will certainly win. Will you please believe in me?"

I vowed so right into her ears. Rossweisse-san then accepted it with a

"Yes."

That would do. It was pretty easy to understand.

---I just have to win against Vidar-san.

If I win, the marriage and all of that other stuff would vanish. I had always forced my way through things absurdly. Even during Riser's incident, Diodora's incident, Loki's incident, Sairaorg's incident, Cao Cao's incident, and Euclid's incident too---.

I had said what I wanted to Rossweisse-san, but because of my embrace, I realised that our faces had gotten closer, and as the situation became awkward, both our faces turned red.

...We were so close that we could almost kiss, but…a sudden move would be unwise even though the atmosphere was good---. Rossweisse-san's lips --- met mine. It was a kiss from Rossweisse-san---.

Because I suddenly received a kiss from the prim and proper late-bloomer Rossweisse-san, I, I-I-I-I-I-I! After the kiss, Rossweisse-san said with a reddened face

"....It was my f-first kiss…. ….I gave it to Ise-kun."

….W-Whaaaaaaaaaaaaaaat!

My head boiled as I became unsure of what to say! A-Also, there was nothing that made me feel more honored than to be her first partner!

"I-I was surprised because it was so sudden...."

When I said that nervously, Rossweisse-san asked

"D-Did you not like it?"

"N-No! It was the best, you know! What I meant was because it was so sudden I felt confused!"

When I said that, Rossweisse-san then replied

"Well then, this time let's properly---"

The atmosphere became nice for the second time, and just when Rossweisse and I wanted to kiss one more time---.

"Ise! I came nyan! I heard that Switch Princess isn't here! Let's do perverted things while she is not here!"

---And, Kuroka busted the door open as she barged into my room energetically! Rossweisse-san and I were surprised and separated from each other as we looked

in that direction! Kuroka appeared wearing only her underwear as her oppai swayed from side to side! Shirone-chan A.K.A Koneko-chan who followed behind her seemed a bit embarrassed.

“....I’m sorry senpai. Even though you were alone with Rossweisse-san, I couldn’t stop Kuroka-oneesama…”

As if sensing the awkward atmosphere, Kuroka blinked with surprise.

“Nyanya? Did I interrupt you?”

Because the mood for kissing a second time had completely vanished, Rossweisse-san and I looked at each other as we let out a small laugh. After that, I had no choice but to join a completely new combination with the Rossweisse-san, Kuroka, and Shirone-chan. Kuroka asked Rossweisse-san as she held onto me. By the way, the soft sensation of a female body enveloped me!

“Hey, Valkyrie teacher. Do you want Ise’s child?”

Why did this bad cat ask that all of a suddennnn! Rossweisse-san was also surprised by that question as she exclaimed ‘Eh!?’ On the contrary, Kuroka rubbed her own stomach as she said

“In the near future, his child will be in here. I really want it fast nya. It’s gotten to the point where even now is okay, you know?”

I got a nosebleed ‘Bu!’ by hearing her usual bold statement. Kuroka then asked Koneko-chan.

“Shirone, why don’t you say it too? That you will reserve his child.”

She was suddenly prompted by her sister. Koneko-chan panicked for a moment, but she quickly pulled herself together and said

“...W-Well, I certainly do want to reserve…though”

Excited, Kuroka then said

“What are you saying? The proposal of us Nekomata was accepted, you know? This means that we’ve already made a reservation nyan. Hey, Ise. Let’s make a lot of kids, okay ♪”

Kuroka sweetly nibbled on my ear! Uhiiiiiiiiii! Because t-this girl had only been inviting me to do voluptuous things since the proposal, it was only natural that I’d no longer be able to resist!

Koneko stood up on the bed as she stripped off her outer garments until she was wearing only her panties, and then straddled on top of me!

“.... T-That’s right, huh. It means that I’ve already reserved huh.”

Somehow, Koneko-chan had become bolder too since that time! The influence of the bad cat was gradually getting stronger! Kuroka asked Rossweisse-san once again as she leaned across me.

“And how about you, do you want Ise’s child?”

Rossweisse-san looked like she was confused about how to answer and panicked a little bit, but she immediately made a stern face and hugged me as if trying to snatch me away from Kuroka and Koneko-chan while saying

“A-Anyway, I will sleep with Ise-kun tonight! I-It’s a special chance after all!”

The sisters Kuroka and Koneko-chan giggled ‘fufu’ as they were surprised by the unusual boldness of Rossweisse-san.

“Well, that’s okay nya”

“...Being able to sleep soundly is the best right now.”

The Nekomata sisters seemed to sense that Rossweisse-san no longer had the motivation to do anything perverted, so the four of us fell asleep. I was restless and couldn’t calm myself down as I was hugged by both Koneko-chan and Kuroka. I was able to confirm the feelings of both myself and Rossweisse-san’s. Now, all that was left was just to deal with the match!

Part 2

And, it was finally the day of the match---.

We, the [Sekiryuutei of the Blazing Truth] team along with Rias arrived in a world of the Norse mythology that became the assembly hall --- Valhalla. The stage this time would be an enormous stadium that was prepared for the tournament situated in a corner of Valhalla --- [Thor Stadium]. A statue of the valiant Thor holding his proud hammer [Mjolnir] was installed at the entrance of the stadium. We separated from Rias in front of the player's entrance.

"I am looking forward to the match."

Rias cheered me on like that before we separated. It seemed like they would be watching our match in the spectator's room for authorised personnel.

"You will certainly win."

"You will win."

"I am counting on you."

"I am cheering for you!"

We received those cheers from Rias' servants Akeno-san, Koneko-chan, Kiba and Gya-suke. My dad, Kunou, Ophis, and Lilith from the Hyoudou Residence also came here to watch my match.

"I'll be cheering for you. Do your best, Ise!" cheered Dad.

Kunou and others continued

"Your opponents might be Gods, but I believe that you will win!"

Ophis and Lilith then said

"We, when the push comes to shove, will assist Ise."

"Will do--"

No, if you guys were to join my team then victory would already be assured! But, that is not possible! Dad then added

"Mum was beginning to say that she might come to see the tournament if you qualify for the main stage. She said that 'If my own son qualified for the main tournament, I can't afford to not come and not see the tournament.'"

"Really? …I see. I will do my best and win."

If mum would come and see my fight, there's nothing that would make me happier. That's probably right, if it's the main stage that should be commemorated, mum might think that she has to come. And also because of that, I can't afford to lose this match. We, the [Sekiryuutei of the Blazing Truth] team fired ourselves up as we approached the fated match---.

As loud cheers from the crowd surrounded us, we of the [Sekiryuutei of Blazing Truth] team went towards the centre of the stadium from the player's entrance.

<<Now, the [Sekiryuutei of Blazing Truth] team is entering the stage! They are really popular with men and women of all ages, and his fans have gathered here in this [Thor Stadium] in Valhalla to see the [Oppai Dragon]!>>

When the commentator said that

"Oppai Dragon!"

"Please Win!!"

"Please show us a good match between you and Vidar-sama!"

The spectators were cheering for me! Ohh, I'm pretty popular in the Norse mythology world too, eh. I actually thought I would be insulted or disrespected.

On the other side---

"Rossweisse!"

"Kyaa! Rossweisse-sama!"

"Rossweisse-san, I will be cheering for you!"

There were also many cheers that went towards Rossweisse-san! Part of it was because this was her home, but it was also because she got noticed in the tournament and her popularity rose up. As a former Valkyrie who participated actively in the tournament, it was no surprise that she garnered a lot of attention in Asgard. Rossweisse-san blushed in response to the warm cheers. After we gathered in the field that was in the central part of the stadium, the [Leisure of the Kings] team made their entrance.

<<Now! People of Asgard, thank you for waiting! Finally, it's our mythology --- the team that Vidar-sama is in, is now going to make their appearance! Entering the stadium is the [Leisure of the Kings] team!>>

The moment the commentator said that---.

We felt a presence above our heads! From the opened ceiling of the stadium --- a giant body rapidly descended from the sky!

Zushiiiiiiin! ---And, the one who vigorously stood in front of us was the giant King of Monsters --- Typhon-san! Starting with Vidar-san, the members of the [Leisure of the Kings] team all stood on his shoulders and arms! In response to this flashy entrance

[Wooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooow!]

The stadium became filled with enormous cheers!

"Vidar-samaaaaaaaaa!"

"Brynhildr-saaaaaaan!"

"Glory to our chief Godddddd!"

The cheers from the spectator's seats were even louder than they were for our entrance. As expected, even though they had a mix of mythologies, it was the team with the chief God of Asgard in it after all. It was only natural that the home of the Norse mythology was full of those who supported Vidar-san and the Valkyries. After both teams gathered, we lined up in the center of the field. The intensity of the opposing [King] Typhon-san with his gigantic body became even more prominent as he stood in front of my eyes. The thirteen-meter Typhon-san then shouted cheerfully from the bottom of his heart.

[GAHAHAHAHA! I will be fighting against a Heavenly Dragon! There's no match that I looked forward to as much as this!]

What an honest and lively laugh. However, the mass and depth of the aura that oozed out from his giant body was real. He wasn't someone that could be taken on half-heartedly. After all, he was the King of Monsters that was said to be equal to Fenrir, or even stronger perhaps---.

Vidar-san's gaze met mine. We didn't say anything, but just by looking at them, I knew that they came with the intention to win.

<<Well then, we will immediately spin the roulette that will determine the rules of this match!>>

After the commentator said that, the roulette had already begun to spin. In a way, you could say that our chances of winning could change. The giant roulette that was installed in the stadium spun, and finally stopped.

---The rules would be [Yggdrasil Climb]!

---! F-For that to be chosen here!

The commentator yelled

<<A~nd, the ruleset this time is the new Tournament-original standard that has even become a hot topic for every mythology, [Yggdrasil Climb]! It's really unexpected for this to be chosen on the stage of Norse mythology! The rules are simple. Run up the artificial Yggdrasil, and the one who reaches the goal on top is the winner! Of course, like the other rules so far, you can also win if you defeat the opponent's [King].>>

A giant tree was shown on the monitor. The size and the height of the tree that pierced through clouds was unbelievable. Though the original Yggdrasil was far bigger, the one that was prepared for the Rating Game still looked pretty big to us. The rules were simple. Just climb to the top and the one who reaches it first, wins. It was really easy to understand. Consequently, the fight would also be more violent. Ravel then said

"The promotion of [Pawn] is possible after reaching the halfway point."

This meant that after reaching the halfway-point our [Pawns] and theirs would all become [Queens]. But, we just need to defeat the Valkyrie squad before reaching the halfway point though. And as we thought about that, the beginning of the game drew closer.

<<Now, the game will start after both teams teleport to the artificial Yggdrasil game field! The [Sekiryuutei of the Blazing Truth] team vs the [Leisure of the Kings] team,

It’s the fight of the century! It will be starting soon!>>

While the commentator was announcing that, both my team and the opponent’s team were enveloped in the teleportation light---.

The place that we were teleported to was the base of the artificial Yggdrasil.

…We could only be astonished by the gargantuan size of the tree. All members looked up, but…

It was only natural that we couldn’t identify the top from here. It’s somewhat higher than the clouds after all. It seemed like Vidar-san’s team teleported to the other side --- the tree’s backside. Of course, attacking before the opposing side started climbing was against the rules.

On Yggdrasil, a spiral-staircase was hung around the tree, but there were also footholds --- floating islands which surrounded the tree. We could utilise those as a place to take a break or do battle. Of course, going to the top by flying was also OK. Based on the overall height of the tree, it looked like it would take a reasonably long time to reach the top. It would take a while even for a normal Devil to reach the top by flying at full speed, and maintaining that pace. We could arrive faster if we focused all of our strength on it, however, we couldn’t do that because our rival would also try to prevent that.

Before the game started, there was a brief period for strategy time. We gathered around the table that was set up at the base of the tree and discussed what to do. Ravel then laid out a piece of paper on the table which had the opponent’s team composition written on it.

Starting from the [King], Typhon, it really was a formidable lineup. I started the meeting while observing it

“...Other than Typhon, Vidar-san, and Apollon-san, there have been some alternations in the opponent’s team, but this time it is a serious lineup.”

The [Pawns] this time were --- the Valkyrie squad. On top of that, it seemed like they were all Rossweisse-san’s colleagues.

“.....To think that I will be fighting not only Brynhildr-senpai, but also the other Valkyries.”

Rossweisse-san had a complex look on her face. But Xenovia laughed fearlessly as she trembled with excitement.

“....It’s a parade of Gods. Even I can’t stop trembling, you know”

Well, that’s normal. I also didn’t like the fact that my opponents were all Gods, but as we already came here, we had no choice but to fight them.

“Could they be the worst, and strongest opponents that I have ever fought?”

I asked Ddraig

[Yeah, they exceed everyone, including Rizevim and Apophis.]

Well, I was glad that this was only a normal match, not a deathmatch. Even so, they

weren't going to give me any kind of handicap. Ddraig then said with frustration in his voice

[..... A lineup this formidable, and even I didn't have a chance to meet them in my previous existence. Now I feel somewhat bitter with this body.]

I couldn't have imagined that I would be fighting a team that surpassed mythologies and races. Ravel then told us clearly

"Speaking honestly, it's not unnatural if we lose this match. That's just how great of a difference there is between our basic fighting power and theirs."

---However, Ravel's expression changed completely into a brave one.

"But, let's fight with the intention to win. There will probably be many opportunities for us to win because of the rules."

[Yeah!]

We were also fired up by our strategist's words! Even if our opponents are Gods, the winner will be the one who reaches the top first. We only need to reach the goal first, even if it was only one of us.

….Well, I personally didn't want to end it like that though. I wanted to at least punch Vidar-san once with my fist. Ravel then said to Roygun Belphegor-san who was participating in our team this time.

"Roygun-sama's specialty as a Devil is [Crack], isn't it? It's a specialty that allows you to create a 'tear' on anything.... You can produce a crack on most things, right?"

Roygun-san then laughed sarcastically

"There is of course a limit you know. I can't produce a 'crack' on those whose power far exceeds mine. It was quite an ability when I was ranked second, however….. As I am right now, if the opponent is Maou-class or God-class, the ability won't be very effective."

Ravel then said as she looked up at Yggdrasil

"...I wanted to have you produce a [Crack] around Yggdrasil's roots and make the tree fall over, but…it seems like it's fairly well-built, so we shouldn't expect that much."

She was thinking about something that audacious! Really, my manager was trying to ruin the core of the rules from the start, huh! Ravel then continued

"Because the rules are simple, our strategy is also simple. ---The aim is to go with a multistage-rocket formation."

[---]

Everyone gasped at Ravel's plan. ...Multistage-rocket formation. That meant that we would fly together, and then she suggested that we should separate in the middle.

Ravel then continued

"I am sure that while our opponents are climbing Yggdrasil, they will have their

players crash into us over here. When that happens, we must also leave someone behind to face them. As for both teams, the common thing is what we and they have recognised, and that is the fact that we only need to have one person reach the top, and that we had to protect the [King]."

….Well, that's the case. Because the rules were simple, we could also easily imagine the situation that would unfold. Irina then said

"There is also a possibility that all of us will face off against all of them, right?"

The possibility of everyone fighting in the middle certainly did exist.

Ravel then said

"An all-out fight, right? There sure is some possibility of that, but…judging from the opponent's nature, I think the players would just move based on their judgment. They are all strong players, therefore their assertiveness is equally strong. And that's coming from the [King], Typhon. This means that because they don't have good coordination, the chance of them attacking us one by one is high."

Just as Ravel said, Vidar-san's team was not a team that excelled in teamwork. It was the type of team that entrusted everything to its members regarding how to fight and earn victory. It was because every member had a strong ego and individual strength. Before the match began, we received some advice from Ravel. If there was something that we could take advantage of in the opponent's team, it was the weakness of their team play. That was why Ravel highlighted that our opponents would come to attack us as we climbed to the top. Agreeing with that notion, I then asked

"So, Ravel, are we going to decide who will be the best to fight against who?"

Ravel nodded and continued.

"Yes, let's think about the compatibility of the opponent's members and the strategy of how to deal with them to a certain extent."

And with that, we discussed how to deal with the opponent's moves before we began to climb up the artificial Yggdrasil---.

And finally the time for the game to start had come.

The commentator yelled

<<Now, it's time to start! Both teams have arrived to the starting point. The game will start when the signal gun on the field is fired! Both teams and spectators, are you ready?>>

There was a brief period of tranquil silence----

And then, the sound of the fired signal gun echoed 'BAAAAAAAAAN'.

<<START!>>

We started to run just as the commentator shouted out!

First, we split up into two groups. One group would run up the spiral staircase and

the other would fly while passing over the floating islands. By not bunching up in one place, we would also avoid a single large attack against the entire team. As a [King], the game would end if I were to be defeated, and I began to run up the stairs. This was only a temporary plan. Whilst I did think about flying through the sky, I chose to take the stairs to begin with after the situation. The ones who took the stairs were Irina, Xenovia, Rossweisse-san, Ravel, Ouryuu, and myself, the group which comparatively consisted of those who had confidence in their stamina. I quickly transformed into my crimson armour. And those who flew through the sky were Bova, Roygun-san, and Bina-shi. Asia and Elmenhilde who didn't have confidence in their stamina rode on Bova's shoulder. Since they flew through the sky, it was possible that they would become easier targets, but because Asia and Elmenhilde would support Bova and Bina-shi, their combination wouldn't crumble unless there were extreme circumstances.

We climbed the stairs at a tremendous pace. As we did that, we were able to visually recognise the opponent's team as there were two stairs prepared, one for each team. The other side's stair group consisted of…Vidar-san, Artemis-san, and Brynhildr-san. This meant that the rest were flying through the sky.

…It meant that their [King], Typhon, was flying through the sky, huh. He was boldly fearless. This meant that he didn't have any fear of getting knocked down.

Both teams had climbed up Yggdrasil for thirty minutes when we started to see a large number of floating islands which surrounded Yggdrasil. ...Indeed, the Tournament organisers were rather thoughtful to provide us with those [You can fight here]….! As if our opponents also understood, the first assaulting enemy finally appeared!

There was someone who went down and stood in the center of one large floating island.

---It was the current chief God of Olympus, Apollon-san. He then said to our team

"Who will be my opponent to keep me back here?"

And, the people on my team who had been pre-determined in our strategy flew out. Xenovia, Irina, and Nakiri. The three of them went down to the floating island that Apollon-san was standing on. Xenovia then boldly said

"Sun God-dono. I am Hyoudou Issei's [Knight]. Let me be your common enemy."

Irina also said as she wielded Hauteclere

"Michael-sama's Ace! Shidou Irina! Currently a member of Hyoudou Issei-kun's team!"

Nakiri then added while enveloping himself in touki

"The next heir of the Nakiri clan of the Five Principal Clans, Nakiri Kouchin Ouryuu. It's an honor to be able to fight with the legendary God, but as I am also the Sekiryuutei's junior, I will keep you down here."

Those three were pretty audacious to choose the God of Sun as their opponent! For God's sake, they sure are such reliable comrades! Apollon-san also seemed like he was satisfied with their introductions.

“That’s an introduction suitable for the comrades of the Sekiryuutei. I am Apollon. The chief God of Olympus.”

After going through the self-introductions, the battle began---.

After their battle began, Rossweisse-san immediately enclosed Xenovia and the others, including Apollon-san with barrier magic.This was to prevent the enemy from escaping from that place, and even if our comrades lost, it could still buy time for us. The barrier that was strengthened by Rossweisse-san using the wand of Misteltein was used to cover the first battlefield. Once the barrier was erected, we left them and continued to go for the top. Below us, divine rays of light were fired off several times, and the shrill sounds of destruction could be heard as the battle instantly intensified.

After entrusting Apollon to Xenovia and others, we reached a huge cavity in the gargantuan Yggdrasil after around ten minutes of climbing. It seemed as though the stairs continued to go even further after passing through the hollow cavity. Since the cave was so large in both width and height, it was possible even for a flashy battle to be conducted here. In other words, it meant that. The Tournament operators wanted to say ‘You can fight here’. Unexpectedly, there was a human figure waiting inside the cave for us---. A woman wearing light armour on top of her dress --- it was the Goddess Artemis. Artemis’ held a bow in her hand, something that also acted as a symbol of her.

After confirming who our next opponent was, Ravel then spoke through a communications intercom.

“It’s Artemis-sama.”

After hearing that, the ones who entered the cave were Bina-shi and Asia! We entrusted Artemis-san to those two. I felt bad about leaving our healer behind here, but…by entrusting her to Bina-shi, not only would Asia’s chance of surviving go up, but it was also because her compatibility with the opponent was good.

“Ise-san! Everyone! I will leave the rest to you!” Asia said to us.

After entrusting the Goddess to those two, we once again erected a magic barrier and then continued to climb. Well, because the opponent was a female, I thought that it might be better if I faced her, but thinking about the fight with Vidar-san, it’s simply a matter of stamina. However, because I had competent comrades, I left it to Bina-shi and Asia. After leaving the fight at the cave to those two, Ravel and I continued to climb up the stairs with the others! Around an hour after the match began, I was finally able to see the middle section of Yggdrasil. A flag that symbolised the halfway-point was placed across the entire circumference of Yggdrasil. After passing the halfway-point, my [Pawns] Ravel, Bova, and Elmenhilde were promoted to [Queen]. And with this, our battle potential had increased. Well, even though it was no more than a minor change for the opponent…

A few minutes after passing the halfway-point, a giant floating island like nothing before appeared in the sky. When that came into view, I saw a giant shadow descend onto it!

[Yeaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah!]

The one who went down and raised their voice was --- unexpectedly, the [King] of

the opposing team, Typhon! Typhon pointed his finger at us as he posed exaggeratedly.

“Now, who will be my opponent!? I am also fine with Sekiryuutei!” screamed Typhon excitedly.

The tension was so high! He was really happy that he was able to fight at the tournament! Typhon had appeared before us, and although we had already decided who would be his opponent...I began to think that it would be better if it was me! The rule was to reach the top, but because defeating the [King] also meant winning, then I could be Typhon’s---.

As I was thinking like that, I could sense a fighting spirit from above! When I looked above, Vidar-san looked at me as he pointed somewhere the top of a staircase. When I looked at the place he pointed at --- it was also a vast floating island, and it looked as if I was invited [Come here!] by my opponent.

...I see. He must have thought ‘If I have to let you become Typhon’s enemy, then I would rather be your enemy’.

As I signalled Ravel and Rossweisse-san with my eyes, we nodded to each other. We had decided that Bova-san, Roygun-san, and Elmenhilde would be Typhon’s opponents, while Ravel, Rossweisse-san and I would fight Vidar-san and --- the Valkyrie squad that Brynhildr-san lead. My comrades and I each moved towards the separate floating islands which would respectively become our battlefields. The fight to reach the top of Yggdrasil entered a critical stage just after passing the halfway point.

Life.DxD
vs Life.GOD –Red Dragon–

Part I

I — Kiba Yuuto, along with my master, Rias-oneesan, and the rest of our team members were watching Ise-kun's match in the authorised personnel room. They positioned their players in several points to deal with the opponents' players as they aimed for the top. The match pairings were:

God Apollon against Xenovia, Irina and Nakiri-kun.

Goddess Artemis against Asia-san and Bina Lessthan-san.

Typhon against Elmenhilde-san, Bova-san and Roygun Belphegor-san.

And, God Vidar against Ise-kun, while the nearby Valkyrie squad fought against Rossweisse-san and Ravel-san.

The fight had already begun. Fierce battles were occuring at various places across the artificial Yggdrasil. The first fight I happened to come across was God Apollon going against Xenovia and the others. The wyverns that Ise-kun had sent to Xenovia got closer and transformed as they clung to Xenovia's body. The next thing I knew, Xenovia had suddenly transformed into the Crimson Destruction Dragonar. The two swordswomen, Xenovia and Irina-san, performed a well-crafted assault upon God Apollon. However, God Apollon handled both of those fast swordswomen by just coating one of his hands with a bit of his shining divine aura! He kept dodging Xenovia's dual-wielding style (Durandal, Excalibur) and Irina-san's Hauteclaire with ease!

[Push through!]

Nakiri-kun, who transformed into his humanoid Dragon form, reduced the distance with intense speed. He then commenced hand-to-hand combat against God Apollon. The touki-coated punches and kicks kept hitting, hitting, hitting, and hitting! God Apollon had to respond to close-quarters combat from Xenovia, Irina-san and Nakiri-kun. —However, the Sun God handled all of that with just one hand!

[So you are going to dodge my hand-to-hand combat, huh!]

Rias-oneesan, who was beside me, was surprised. Xenovia, Irina-san and Nakiri-kun leapt backwards, creating distance as Xenovia transformed her Excalibur into a whip with its 'mimic' specialty and suddenly lashed out at God Apollon. On top of that, she combined her attack with a godlike speed and Excalibur's 'transparency' specialty making the lash (the pointy end of a whip) invisible. But even though God Apollon couldn't see the whip-transformed Excalibur, he easily dodged the attack! It was as if he felt the presence of the small amount of aura that flowed through it! No, he must have done 'that'! The invisible whip that he dodged destroyed a large part of the floating island they were fighting on. That was Excalibur's 'destruction' specialty. It seemed like Xenovia had already become adept at combining Excalibur's specialties. While God Apollon kept dodging Xenovia's continuous whip attacks, Irina coated her Hauteclaire with holy aura!

"Haaaaaaaaaaaa!"

Irina cried as she swung her Hauteclaire continuously. And every time she did that, powerful holy aura kept on flying towards God Apollon! However, he reacted to this by simply lighting a small amount of divine aura in his hand and continuously firing it. Without any hesitation, Irina-san created a whip like Xenovia's that was filled with light energy and started to swing it along with her battle comrade simultaneously! One was a light-engulfed whip, the other was an invisible whip, and both of them were being flogged simultaneously. Vision and presence, whichever it was, would be impossible to dodge if the one being targeted wasn't a God-class being or other kinds of existence on a similar level. Yes, God-class or similar-level…… That's why, because it was God Apollon, he could dodge their simultaneous attack!

"Haaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!"

Nakiri-kun transformed his touki into a sphere and continuously fired at God Apollon from a distance! The touki bullets weren't just in the range of a few dozens. There were around a hundred that were fired towards the Sun God. The volume of Nakiri-kun's touki was also surprising to us, but Apollon-san repelled all of them with just one hand…! As Xenovia looked at the barrage of touki, she yelled.

[Turn, turn, turnnnnn !!!]

The touki bullets that were fired by Nakiri-kun — changed their trajectory and cornered God Apollon! Was this because Xenovia used Excalibur's power of 'ruler'!? —However, God Apollon wasn't even fazed by Xenovia's growth as he dodged and repelled the bullets. God Apollon suddenly flew forward while repelling Nakiri-kun's touki bullet. With godlike speed, he closed the distance and punched Xenovia's stomach with great vigor! That one punch broke the armor that Xenovia was wearing, leaving her body exposed!

[Gaha!]

Xenovia wailed as she received the blow directly! That one blow from the Sun God was filled with the power of light that Devils were weak to. Normally, It wouldn't be strange if one retired from that one blow. —However, Xenovia didn't disappear as she swung her sword down towards the nearby God Apollon. He tried to dodge that, but—.

[I got you!]

Irina-san's whip latched onto God Apollon's empty hand! God Apollon, who couldn't break free, was almost struck by Xenovia's downward slash! However, God Apollon quickly kicked Xenovia away! Xenovia was sent flying backwards…but she got back up immediately. Both the punch and the kick were filled with the Sun God's force. However, Xenovia was in good condition. The reason was the scabbard that was on her back. —It was the scabbard of Excalibur. Rias-oneesan then said.

"…That is the scabbard of Excalibur that is said to make the holder immortal, though with some restrictions."

Yes, Xenovia had transitioned into a state of limited invulnerability. Even if she were to be fatally wounded by the Sun God's attack, as long as she had that scabbard, it would be healed completely. God Apollon admired her.

[The scabbard of Excalibur…. I see, even though you are unlike the Angel and

humanoid Dragon, the reason why you are able to stand up to me despite your weakness to light is because of that, huh. You could even say that the most suitable members were chosen for your team's lineup.]

Xenovia then announced to the God as she equipped Durandal and Excalibur.

[This is the worst. If Ise defeats their [King], then all we have to do is hold them back until someone from our team reaches the goal after all.]

Irina-san and Nakiri-kun also prepared for another fight along with Xenovia. Their opponent was highly ranked. A God. The legendary Sun God. You could even say that losing was inevitable. But still, with unwavering determination, they took up their stance in front of the current chief God of Olympus, the Sun God, and they got ready for another fight. Irina-san said.

[My darling Ise-kun is going to win, you know? He is my darling after all!]

Nakiri-kun added as he enveloped his entire body with touki.

[I — have decided that I will become strong under him. I have to become strong. For him…I have to win for the sake of he who willfully changed our fate!]

The combined strength of Xenovia, Irina-san and Nakiri-kun forced God Apollon to start using his other hand. He enveloped both of his hands with divine aura, and also released it throughout his whole body.

[I don't like flashy fights. —However, I will aim to meet your expectations as warriors. I will have you taste the power of the one crowned with the name 'Sun'.]

And then, the fight of Xenovia and others continued to intensify. On the other side, Asia and Bina Lessthan-san fought against Goddess Artemis. Bina Lessthan-san released Maou-class aura from her entire body, while Goddess Artemis aimed to shoot her down with her divine arrow. Once an arrow was fired by Goddess Artemis, it would always pierce its target no matter where the opponent was. The shot arrow changed its trajectory in the sky as it pursued the target who tried to escape. On top of that, the arrows were filled with divine aura. A lethal wound would be guaranteed even just from a single hit. Bina-san shot all of it down with her demonic energy, and then released demonic energy attacks once she saw an opening. However, Goddess Artemis also counterbalanced Bina-san's demonic energy with her arrows, which allowed her to completely avoid her attacks, but… As a result of the demonic energy and the arrows which were shot during the offensive and defensive battle between the female Goddess and the Devils in the cave, significant damage to the inner part of Yggdrasil occurred. However, the system of Rating Game quickly activated and restored the destroyed parts. If there wasn't something like that, I was sure that Yggdrasil would have suffered a great amount of damage since a while ago. Goddess Artemis fired her arrows towards Asia every time she saw an opening from Bina-san. However—

[I will protect Asia-tan.]

The arrows that had been fired were stopped due to the iron defense of the summoned Fafnir!

[Kuh! It's so solid!]

Fafnir's defensive barrier surprised even Goddess Artemis. The strong will of Fafnir to protect Asia neglected even the fact that his enemy was a Goddess. On top of that, Asia-san wasn't only just being protected. According to the Rating Game's rules, there would be a limit if the familiar was too strong. Fafnir couldn't stay there for a long time. That's why they had to do everything they could once they summoned Fafnir. As Asia-san searched in her pocket — she took 'that' out! —It was underwear, a pair of panties! The commentator then yelled!

<<Ohhh! Asia-senshu, s-s-she has taken out a pair of panties! I-Is this that thing!? Is that rumoured thing going to come out?>>

The rumors about Fafnir's specialty had already spread widely, huh? As the commentators continued to speak, all the spectators also began to look forward to it! Asia face turned bright red as she was embarrassed, and her voice was more high-pitched than usual as she said.

[Fafnir-san's p-p-p-p-p-p-p-p-p-p-p-p-p-p-panties classroom is going to start sooooooooooooon!]

—She was desperate! Asia-san threw her panties to Fafnir! Fafnir then caught it with its mouth and started eating it! As expected, he would eat the panties, huh! A brief moment of silence passed… Bina-san and Goddess Artemis stopped fighting and turned their focus to Fafnir because of the extremely unusual sight!

[I ate Asia-tan's see-through panties.]

Suddenly, a blinding light was emitted from Fafnir's whole body. What was that light? Why did he light up!? Just how effective was the underwear? After pointing his mouth towards the ground —a ladder-like thing came out from Fafnir's mouth! Why a ladder!? All of this was already far beyond our understanding!

[This week's shocking and surprising monster, march on!]

As Fafnir said that— something came out from his mouth and began to follow the steps of the ladder!

[Panty Panty Panty Panty Panty Panty Panty Panty Panty]

While the strange voice grew louder and louder, a large number of small Fafnirs started to come out from his mouth! What in the world is this….? What is happening….? Everyone in the spectator room was dumbfounded as well, and it was as though their expressions conveyed the idea that all of this was 'Unbelievable'!

"…..What would have come out last week?"

Rias-oneesan said something that didn't make any sense, but…I was afraid that she had gotten too confused. The number of small Fafnirs surpassed the double digits, and around a hundred of them lined up side-by-side as they began to march towards Goddess Artemis!

[W—What do you plan on doing…?]

Even the Goddess was frightened!

The small Fafnirs started to fly towards Goddess Artemis!

[Panty Panty Panty Panty Panty Panty Panty Panty Panty]

However, their target was the area below her abdomen! The Goddess' crotch! The small Fafnirs bit Goddess Artemis's — panties! Everyone understood what that meant! —Ahh, the small Fafnirs were planning to eat the Goddess Artemis's panties! No further explanations were required!

[Do you plan to take my underwear!? I can't believe it!]

Goddess Artemis tried to shake off the small Fafnirs who climbed over her body, but they kept targeting her underwear without even flinching! They were incredibly persistent in chasing after their target!

<<And! What a surprise! The mini Fafnirs that the Dragon King Fafnir released are trying to take Goddess Artemis's underwear!>>

Even the commentator had no choice but to say that! Goddess Artemis tried to blow the swarm of mini Fafnirs away by coating her bow with her aura, but—. After being blown away, a new swarm of mini Fafnirs was sent out from real Fafnir's mouth!

[I'm sorry, I'm sorry! I am so sorryyyyyy!]

Asia-san apologised as she cried because of the way the situation had turned into! However, Asia-san and Fafnir's combination surely dealt quite a blow to the Goddess!

[If that's the case, I'll aim for the master!]

When Goddess Artemis tried to change her target to Asia-san…

[Asia-tan, protect.]

Fafnir's strong will repelled the Goddess' powerful blow.

[Such solid defense!]

It was only natural that Goddess Artemis was shocked! However, I was sure that the power of the Dragon King who got excited by panties exceeded her understanding! The commentator explained the situation to us.

<<This is really frightening! The clones that the Dragon King released continue to aim for Goddess Artemis's underwear, while Asia-senshu, who was targeted by Artemis-senshu, was protected by the impregnable wall of Fafnir! On the other hand, even though Fafnir did take some damage, Asia-senshu is continuously healing him from behind! When it comes to female opponents, this could be described as the ultimate battle formation!>>

Bina-san also chimed in by attacking with her demonic energy!

[You have an opening!]

[Kuh!]

Goddess Artemis had to deal with a Maou-class opponent while also trying to protect her underwear at the same time! It seemed like Goddess Artemis was having a hard time against the unexpected combination of Asia-san (+Fafnir) and Bina-san.

<<Artemis-senshu might have to make a choice here. Will she defend her panties while attacking with a lack of focus, or accept the shame and give her all to attack!? >>

Just as the commentator explained to the other spectators, this situation would continue until Fafnir disappeared from the field. The move that Ravel-san had made in order to deal with Goddess Artemis was superb. However, while there was one battle which progressed smoothly, there was also another in which they struggled—.

And so, this particular opponent that they faced was brutal. The third fight was Elmenhilde-san, Bova-san and Roygun-san against Typhon. …t was a completely one-sided match.

[Gahahahahahaha! What lively folks!]

At the surface of a vast floating island which was situated slightly above the middle part of Yggdrasil—-.lashes of lighting and heavy rain kept pouring down as the weather on that floating island became stormy! Typhon, who was the origin of the word 'Typhoon', changed the weather just by unleashing an attack. When Bova-san tried to charge in, an extreme downpour of rain and wind was directed at him and killed his momentum. Even though Elmenhilde drank the blood that was prepared beforehand by Ise-kun and Ravel-san, which gave her the characteristics of both a Dragon and a Phoenix, she was unable to even endure the King of Monsters' attack. However, the existence of Roygun Belphegor-san, who didn't retire gave them a huge foothold. She created a [Crack] on the strong winds, flashes of lightning and the likes that were unleashed by Typhon. The wind and lighting that had [Crack] on them strayed off towards other directions and didn't land any direct hits on them. Typhon stopped controlling the weather for a short time and breathed flames from his mouth, but after having a [Crack] made on it, it was divided into numerous parts that killed its vigor and dispersed his brutal firepower. Thanks to that, Bova-san and Elmenhilde-san currently still hadn't suffered any substantial damage. Roygun-san was a former Maou-class being. Even after her power had dropped as she returned the [King] piece, she still displayed such ability… It seemed as though she was able to pinpoint the location of each attack, and used her ability [Crack] at the location that could most easily be set up. That was most likely her field of expertise, and what she was a master at doing. After scattering the attacks and finding an opening, Bova-san and Elmenhilde-san unleashed their own attacks. Even though Bova-san and the others' attacks reached, there was no noticeable damage. The King of Monsters Typhon-san, who was clearly on a different level, seemed surprised and cheerfully laughed.

[This is a big deal! You're supposed to be weaker than me, yet you managed to counter all of my attacks!]

Typhon-san praised Roygun-san. Roygun-san herself elegantly laughed as she said 'You're welcome', but…her stamina wasn't infinite. Sooner or later, the situation would reach a point where they would be pressured by Typhon's continuous attacks. But still, I admired Roygun-san's willpower as a former second ranker to try and create an opening while remaining undefeated against the King of Monsters. — However, if they took a direct hit from even a single blow, they would be enveloped in the light of retirement. This match was the closest and most fierce match they had ever been forced into. And then, I looked at the battle of Ise-kun and the others, who

were fighting in the highest place—.

Part 2

I — Hyoudou Issei, descended upon the highest floating island amongst the ones that my comrades had chosen as I stood and looked at the opponent before my eyes. My opponent was — the chief God of the Norse mythology, Vidar-san, and the Valkyrie squad. The four war maidens lined up surrounding their captain Brynhildr-san, while on our side was a team of three that consisted of Ravel, Rossweisse-san and me. Vidar-san casually raised his hand.

“Yo, Sekiryuutei.”

Vidar-san then pointed his index finger up to the sky.

“You want to go up there, right? Well, according to the rules, the one who reaches the goal first will be the winner. —But that’s boring right? Both to me and the spectators.”

Vidar-san said that as he tapped the ground with his toes.

“So let’s have a match here. I will take on the Sekiryuutei, while the Valkyries go against the others. Of course, that includes the young lady of Phoenix over there.”

…Well, that was pretty easy to understand. I will be fighting Vidar-san, while Rossweisse-san and Ravel would go against the Valkyrie squad. Rossweisse-san faced Brynhildr-san and her former colleagues.

“…Brynhildr-senpai, everyone.”

Brynhildr-san unsheathed her sword from her waist as she said.

“You…have probably been training, right?”

Rossweisse-san nodded as she drew her Misteltein wand out.

“…Yes. Even though I have never won a single match, I will still challenge you.”

“All right, I don’t mind. My master is currently Vidar-sama, and your current master is the Red Dragon over there. It seems we have no choice but to face each other!”

Ravel said to Rossweisse-san, who had prepared her stance.

“… I might not be of much help, but I will try to assist you as much as I can.”

And with that, the fight between the Valkyrie squad against Rossweisse-san together with Ravel began! Meanwhile, I stood in front of Vidar-san. My inner voice — Ddraig said.

[After starting from a fight against a Fallen Angel, you finally have a God as your opponent.]

Aah, that’s right. Well, I did fight once during Loki’s incident, but…I guess that didn’t count, as many of my comrades were also there. So this might be my first time fighting a God seriously.

[…To be honest, I also wanted to try fighting against Typhon.]

There was a part of me that thought of them as ‘fellow monsters’, but right now, I had to defeat the chief God-sama who was in front of my eyes! After glaring at each other, Vidar-san and I flew forward simultaneously. As I struck him with my fist, Vidar-san easily stopped my blow with his boots that he was so proud of! My fists and…Vidar-san’s kicks negated each other! —Then, while putting strength into my punches, I recited the incantation in a flash!

“—The Crimson Red Dragon dwelling within me, awaken from your dominance”

A dazzling crimson glow was emitted from the gem on my right gauntlet. At the same time, I continued to exchange blows through kicks and punches with Vidar-san!

[—The Crimson Heavenly Dragon I possess within me, rise up to become a King and roar]

Ophis’ voice echoed out from the gem—.

“—The jet-black God of Infinity”

The gem on my left gauntlet unleashed a jet-black aura. Vidar-san jumped back as soon as he saw the jet-black aura.An incredible crimson aura enveloped my entire body.

[—The glorious God of Dreams]

The jet-black aura of infinity was then encased over it—.

“[—Watch over the false forbidden existence we shall become that transcends the boundaries]”

My crimson armour was then tinged with a jet-black pattern. The power of the Dragon God had fully manifested. And then we recited the final verse together—.

“[—Thou shalt dance like radiance within our inferno]”

“<<[D∞D!! D∞D D∞D!! D∞D D∞D D∞D!!!! D∞D D∞D D∞D D∞D D∞D D∞D!!!!!! D∞D D∞D D∞D D∞D D∞D D∞D D∞D D∞D D∞D D∞D D∞D D∞D!!!!!!!!]>>”

All of the gems resounded with a voice which said [D∞D!!] and permeated through to the soul. A ∞ symbol emerged on all of the gems!

“[<<Dragon ∞ Drive!!!!!>>]”

As I ended my chant, I transformed into my jet-black crimson armour! My Pseudo Dragon Deification could only last up to ten seconds until now, but…now, it’s different! Inside the gem on my left gauntlet, the infinity symbol rotated vertically as it doubled, creating a 88 symbol. The meaning of that was [88]. That means, I could currently… I sent Vidar-san’s kick back with my punches and threw him off balance! I closed my distance in a flash as I made Ascalon appear on my left hand! Vidar-san dodged my quick slash and jumped back as he pulled away from Ascalon! —However, that wasn’t the only Ascalon I had!

“Ascalon II!”

[Blade Two!!]

Along with a new voice, the second Ascalon sprung out from my right gauntlet! Vidar-san couldn't dodge it completely as he didn't expect another one and was forced to have his left forearm struck by Ascalon! This match was the first time I had taken out Ascalon II. No wonder he was surprised! Vidar-san, who got slashed, tried to kick me away! But, I also quickly regained my balance and punched him back at high speed! Vidar-san tried to deflect my blows with his special kicking technique, but — my fist slammed into Vidar-san's kick and instantly threw him off balance! I didn't show him any mercy as I immediately got close to him and punched his face! A good sound 'pow' could be heard as it echoed through the surroundings. My punch did reach Vidar-san's face, but…the middle-kick that he unleashed with lightning speed also struck my left upper arm. …The impact was transmitted to my upper left arm even through my armour, and resulted in substantial damage. Vidar-san drew back briefly after we exchanged blows. On his left forearm, there was a graze with fresh blood. He also had a nosebleed as blood was dripping from his nose. —I hit him once. Well, if I'm using Dragon Deification, I can even take on a God! Vidar-san then tensed his forearm and stopped the bleeding. …Just by tightening his muscles, he could stop the bleeding, huh…? Vidar-san wiped the blood from his nose with his thumb as he cheerfully said.

"You got me good. You managed to somehow keep up with your opponent who is a God. Also, who would have thought that your 'count' would have increased that much."

Vidar said as he looked at the 'count' on my gauntlet. It's exactly as Vidar-san said. The miracle drug Amrita might have affected me as I could now stay in my Pseudo Dragon Deification form for eighty-eight minutes. I could stay in this form for more than an hour… This was a huge change. It would be no exaggeration to call it a rapid evolution. After all, this Dragonification that could even take on a God of this class was an important key for the fight against the strongest team combination. … However, this was a power that existed inside me all along. And it's because of my 'motivation', that I could achieve this state.

"Well, I also did things that could have cost me my life."

Vidar-san looked satisfied after hearing my answer. …And, even though I was able to be on the offensive side, something bothered me. —The figure [8] that was displayed in the jewel of my right gauntlet. It wasn't there when we were investigating my Sacred Gear to see how Amrita might have modified it. Assuming that it was some sort of count, I think it meant eight minutes, but…what would happen when the counter reached 0…?

I wasn't able to put my mind at ease about the changes to my body, but in the meantime, the fierce fight between the Valkyrie squad against Rossweisse-san and Ravel raged on a short distance away from me. The Valkyrie squad was divided into two groups; one was a close-quarter type, and the other was a long-range type that used magic as their main weapon. The squad attacked both Rossweisse-san and Ravel with close-ranged attacks and long-ranged magic attacks at the same time! To top that off, the Valkyrie squad leader Brynhildr-san commenced the attack with a blade imbued with magic (fire dwelled within the blade of the sword)! Rossweisse-san developed a defensive magic circle and defended against Brynhildr-san's sword.

Brynhildr-san said.

“Defensive magic! It’s not something we would usually see in our Valkyrie days!”

Rossweisse-san, who was being overwhelmed, said replied.

“… I had an unexpected talent for it, you know!”

The Mistilteinn wand shone brightly in Rossweisse-san’s hand as she increased her magic output! The firmness of the defensive magic circle was then strengthened as it jostled against Brynhildr-san’s magic sword! —However, before Brynhildr was knocked back, she weaved signs just as she put her hands in front of her, shouting ‘Release!’, and the defensive magic circle that Rossweisse-san created was undone! Brynhildr-san then commanded the Valkyrie squad!

“Now!”

The Valkyrie squad unleashed a burst of fire magic all at once!

“Be careful! It’s dangerous!”

Ravel then appeared in front of her as she created a defensive magic circle and covered Rossweisse-san! The precision of Ravel’s defensive magic was overpowered and immediately destroyed by the Valkyrie squad whose origin was the same as magic itself. The fire magic rained down all over Ravel! Luckily, Ravel was a member of the immortal Phoenix Clan, so even if she received attacks, the flame would restore her body to its original condition. However, the recovery did use quite a lot of stamina. If her body were to be destroyed several times, sooner or later, she would be defeated due to lack of stamina. Rossweisse-san was shocked by the fact that her defensive magic circle had been overpowered. Even though this time, I had registered her with the [Bishop] piece, so her magical power had been buffed. Brynhildr-san said.

“You haven’t fixed your weakness since that time, have you? —After being in an offensive stance and thinking that you could counterattack, you became full of openings. You haven’t changed since that time.”

The savage comment made Rossweisse-san feel frustrated. Brynhildr-san then pointed her sword at Rossweisse-san.

“Your magic power exceeds even mine thanks to that wand. No, even without the wand, you are better than me in terms of magic power. However, magic isn’t all about power, you know?”

The Valkyrie squad once again lined up around Brynhildr-san. The war maidens then said.

“Rossweisse-san, I pity you. However, this is the captain’s order!”

“This is your punishment for getting a boyfriend sooner than us!”

“But, I am sure that a late bloomer like you hasn’t even kissed yet!”

They said those things. Vidar-san then said to me.

“The Valkyries are generally divided into two types. The first kind are those who

quickly find themselves a handsome boyfriend and retire early, while the other kind are those who continue being Valkyries after being unable to find a boyfriend for a long time. These guys here are, well…you know it. Including the captain."

Aahh, these Valkyries were the ones who couldn't find boyfriends, huh… Wait, Brynhildr-san too….? Brynhildr-san spoke proudly as I looked at her.

"A maiden's kiss and purity should only be taken by a prince who will certainly appear on a white horse, right, everyone?"

[Yes!]

The Valkyrie squad responded energetically to Brynhildr-san's words.

… A prince riding a w-white horse, huhhhhhhhhhh!? … T-To think that the captain of the Valkyrie squad… The strongest Valkyrie is…a daydreaming maiden….! S-She is so cute, isn't she!? But then, Rossweisse-san murmured as her face became red.

"…I did it."

"Huh? Did what?"

Rossweisse-san directly and clearly answered the question that Brynhildr-san asked.

"I kissed. With Hyoudou Issei-kun."

Starting from Brynhildr-san, every one of the Valkyrie squad was frozen in place following those words. The atmosphere suddenly became stiff and silent. Brynhildr-san said as she trembled.

"… K-K… K-K-K-K-K…. Kiss, you did it? With a male?"

Rossweisse-san nodded in response to Brynhildr-san's question. As if the war maidens were all shocked, they released their attacking stance! I-It shocked them that much!? Was a kiss that important to Valkyries, who didn't have any relationship with men!? Brynhildr-san screamed.

"No way! You are too perverted! Rose is perverteeeeeed! I can't believe you did something like that before getting married, yaknow!"

She said it with a dialect! She said [yaknow]! The members of Valkyrie squad also added as their faces reddened.

"You are perverted!"

"Rose, you have gone too far!"

"I have never even held hands with a male!"

"And on top of that, you did it with a younger male! What a perverted girl you are!"

…….

…I-I couldn't say anything. I-I see, so many of the single Valkyries are incredibly innocent, huh. Well, it was certainly the same with Rossweisse-san, as she was as naive as them. Uwaa, what a waste! To not have a boyfriend even though all of them were so beautiful! Anyway, that dialect is a standard for Valkyries, huh…? I learned

so much today… Vidar-san said to me in a small voice.

(Brynhildr is still a virgin, you know. Of course, everyone in that group too. They are all late bloomers who pale in comparison to Rossweisse-san.)

Are you serious!? Brynhildr-san and everyone in the Valkyrie squad… It developed into a wonderful situation, but our strategist didn't let this chance go away.

"They released their attacking stance! Rossweisse-sama, let's counterattack with magic!"

"Y-You are right!"

Rossweisse-san instantly responded and released a magic attack at the Valkyrie squad as she held the wand in her hand. A giant full-burst downpour was directed at the Valkyrie squad! It was probably because of the feeling 'One of our ex-comrades kissed someone earlier than us' that the Valkyrie squad—.

""""Kyaaa!""""

The strongly risen magic power that Rossweisse-san channeled in front of her was enveloped by the retirement light!

<<From the [Leisure of the Kings] Team, four [Pawns] have retired!>>

There was a retirement report! All right! I didn't really know, but I didn't think that the kiss that I shared with Rossweisse-san last night would have such an impact on the game! However, since the Valkyrie squad had been defeated by Rossweisse-san, Brynhildr-san looked like she had become calm again and pulled herself together as she equipped her blade once again. A glimmer of light shone on that blade. That must be light magic. Because Rossweisse-san and Ravel were Devils, she endowed her blade with the light that was a Devil's weakness.

"It was my fault. Let's resume the attack once more, shall we?"

The fight between Rossweisse-san + Ravel against Brynhildr intensified.

— While it was good to pay attention to the fight between the fellow Valkyries…my first priority was to fight against Vidar-san, who was in front of me. Vidar-san then said.

"We can keep hitting each other like this, but it's not entertaining. —I also want to capture the spectators' hearts."

As Vidar-san said that, he created a magic circle in his hand. The pattern belonged to Norse magic.

"Your [Bishop] over there is called Asia-chan, right? She personally attracted attention because she is participating as a Dragon priestess. So I also had an interest in making a pact with a famous Dragon. That's why I added him to my team."

Vidar-san was probably talking about the Dragon in their team, Midgardsormr. He also entered the match this time, but we had not seen his form until now. He could be sleeping at the bottom of Yggdrasil…

"Come forth, oh will of the mighty Dragon."

As Vidar-san said that, something was projected from the magic circle on his hand. It was the figure of a giant Dragon who was sleeping at the bottom of Yggdrasil. Because his original form was around five hundred to six hundred meters, he didn't summon him directly, but rather just projected his will. It was the same as the summoning of his consciousness during Loki's incident.

"It's finally the time to show up, Midgardsormr. …Hey, are you awake?"

Vidar san tried to talk to the projected Midgardsormr, but…

[……ZZZZZZZZZ……]

The lazy Dragon was still asleep.

"… I have to wake him up, huh?"

Vidar-san sighed and after he poked the projected image, it seemed to have an effect on the other side as Midgardsormr opened his eyes.

[…Wha? Who is it? Oh, it's Vidar… What's up?]

"It's not 'What's up?'. I'll have you help me in accordance with the pact we made the other day."

[…Okay…I have no choice. But please, end it quickly.]

After that exchange of words, the magic circle on his hand glowed and transformed into a jewel. I was surprisingly familiar with that jewel. …Azazel-sensei once used something like that before… As Vidar-san lifted his leg up, he operated the mechanism on his footwear, and on the side of his calf, there was an indent that appeared to have the purpose of holding something. He affixed the jewel into that indent. In an instant, the gem that was attached to his footwear caused it to begin emitting a grey light. …Don't tell me, he's going to…! Vidar-san's whole body was enveloped in a grey aura.

"These boots are an improved model. With the help of the Grigori, our Norse mythology tried to copy the Sacred Gear system by also using the power of the original Yggdrasil!"

The light that Vidar-san emitted was so bright that it covered the entire floating island and made me want to shield my eyes from it! After the light settled down, there was — a materialised full-body suit of plate armour constructed from a Dragon's power just like Vali's, Saji's, and mine! It was only natural that I had a sense of deja vu! That was…exactly the same as the way that Azazel-sensei turned Fafnir into armour! An artificial Sacred Gear armor! It was used by Vidar-san! The pact was with…the Dragon King Midgardsormr! A full set of grey plate armour! However, there was a slight difference between ours and his, which he had made by following Azazel-sensei's method. The bulk of the armor was concentrated around his feet, and that seemed to be where the centre of the structure. The parts on his legs also seemed more elaborated than his arms. It was fitting for a wielder those primary attacks were kicks.Vidar-san explained as he tapped his toes against the ground.

[I would say this is a semi-God armament. The Asgard version of the artificial Sacred Gear. —I named this form [Ragnarok Earth Berserk]. It's a simple, yet good name, right?]

After saying that, Vidar-san lowered his posture and prepared to jump.

[All right, it's time for the second round!]

The booster on the back of Vidar-san's armor emitted fire! The next moment, he flew with godly speed towards me! I responded to it in an instant as I countered by throwing a quick punch, but just as it was on the verge of hitting, Vidar-san lightly dodged my attack by just a few millimeters as if he was dancing! Vidar-san turned as he aimed and launched a high-kick towards my head! I bent my upper body as I tried to dodge his high kick, but — while in that position, Vidar-san spun his entire body and kicked one more time! What an acrobatic move! As I couldn't respond to the second kick that he launched at great speed, I guarded with my left arm and suffered the impact of the kick! I received an intense attack that surpassed my guard as I got blown away! I fell over and rolled across the ground several times before I quickly stood back up and turned my body towards Vidar-san—

[Too slow!]

Vidar-san had already closed the distance and unleashed a kick towards me without stopping! The heaviness of those hits…the impact and damage even penetrated my Dragon Deification armour and went through to my body! Kuh! These kicks were too fast! Because I couldn't see the beginning, I couldn't predict where they would come from! On top of that, he could also change the trajectory so that when I thought that it was going to be a low kick, it turned out to be a middle kick, and when I thought that it was going to be a middle kick, it turned out to be a high kick! And like so, he kept finding my openings, and occasionally kicked me straight in the abdomen as well, keeping me on my toes! Compared to punches, there was more variety in his kicks, and they were also less predictable. But the speed, agility, and heaviness of Vidar-san's kicking technique exceeded what he was recognised for! Thinking about it, this was the first time I had fought against someone whose forte was kicks, and that was why it felt pretty difficult! Not only that, but his evasion speed was also amazing, so he always saw through my attacks and dodged it in real-time! He always grasped the reach of my attacks! If I had to describe him, his type was like Kiba. However, Kiba used swords while he used kicks! On top of having my own draconic armour, I could also destroy his armour with the Dragon Slayer! I doubled the power of Ascalon on my hand and commenced an attack, but…as if he had anticipated this, he lightly dodged all the Dragon Slayer attacks! Kuh! So a half-hearted Dragon Slayer endowment won't work, huh! Vidar-san said as he slipped through my punches.

[Imitating the Sacred Gear users who wear such armor, I also thought of a special move.]

Vidar-san concentrated an enormous amount of aura on his feet! It was enough to make me shudder! That aura was then mixed with Midgardsormr's grey aura and made a terrifying and dense wave that shouldn't even be possible. As Vidar-san jumped from that place swiftly, he created a magic circle in the air and used it as footholds for his leaps!

[Shoot!]

Along with that voice, another voice could be heard from the gem on Vidar-san's armor.

[Maximum Charge!!]

Vidar-san, who was clad in a tremendous amount of aura, jumped towards me with godly speed! I tried to dodge it as it looked like it would be dangerous if I took a direct hit, but…before I had realised, a magic circle appeared on my back and bound me! I emitted aura throughout my whole body and forcefully destroyed the magic circle. I could move freely again, but by that time, it was already too late.

[—Fimbulvetr Shot!]

Vidar-san's kick pierced through my stomach… Upon receiving that intense blow, I got blown away backwards a great distance as I crossed over the floating island and crashed onto Yggdrasil! …A part of Yggdrasil was violently destroyed, and the force of the kick stopped. …I myself…my whole body trembled because of the damage I took from that one kick.

"Gaha!"

I spat out blood from my mouth. …The abdominal part of the Dragon Deification armor was damaged. That single strike from a God could even destroy my Dragon Deification armour, huh… I somehow stood up from Yggdrasil as I spread my dragon wings and returned to the floating island. Both the announcer and the commentator went through a play-by-play of the attack from just earlier.

<<Fimbulvetr, in other words, it's about the [Fimbul Winter] in the Norse mythology. A phenomenon that is said to be the sign of the end of the world, Ragnarok.>>

<<The chief God Vidar-senshu crowned his secret move with that name. What a frightening attack indeed. For it to be able to damage the Sekiryuutei's black armor that much…>>

Even though the armor had been repaired, if I got hit by that kick many times, as expected, even my Dragon Deification armour wouldn't last… I had no choice but to find an opening and finish it with either Infinity Blaster or Longinus Smasher. Yes, it was just when I had started to think about my next move.

<<From the [Sekiryuutei of the Blazing Truth] Team, one [Knight] and one [Rook] have retired.>>

—! That was…the announcer reporting that players from my team had retired! While I was still reeling in shock, it continued.

<<Also from the [Sekiryuutei of the Blazing Truth] Team, two [Pawns] have retired.>>

…Are you serious. Ravel was still fighting, which meant that the remaining [Pawns] Bova and Elmenhilde had… While I received the report about my comrades' retirement, those people came and gathered—.

[Gahahaha! You still haven't defeated him, huh, Vidar!]

The one who appeared with a lively laugh was the giant King of Monsters, Typhon. Typhon was supposed to have been fighting Bova, Elmenhilde and Roygun-san.

[The Devil woman managed to somehow keep up until the end, but…she collapsed due to lack of stamina. I am sure that she will retire soon.]

Typhon said. …I see, everyone but Roygun-san retired…. And even if Roygun-san didn't retire, she wouldn't be able to fight, huh. Apollon-san flew towards me along with the brilliance of the sun's light.

"I am sorry for being late. It took longer than I expected."

If Apollon was here then that meant Xenovia, Irina and Nakiri had…. And on top of that, it seemed like he also broke Rossweisse-san's barrier. Apollon-san said.

"I couldn't finish the Durandal user off as she has Excalibur's scabbard, but…she shouldn't be able to move anymore as I trapped her within a cage of light."

…Xenovia had become immortal thanks to the scabbard of Excalibur, but she couldn't come here because of God Apollon's prison! Vidar-san apologised to Typhon and Apollon-san.

[I am sorry. As expected, the Sekiryuutei is on a different level. It seems like I couldn't defeat him that easily.]

Typhon could only laugh.

[That's nice! If that's the case, then I will take your place! Ddraig! Come out, Ddraig!]

Rather than me, it seemed like was provoking Ddraig who resided inside me. Vidar-san ordered the energetic Typhon with his hand.

[Nope, this is a fight that I started. I will defeat him. …Anyway, where's Artemis?]

The Goddess didn't show up here. Apollon-san then said.

"… It seems like the Dragon priestess who uses Fafnir is stronger than we expected in a different way. It seems like Fafnir's time was up as he already disappeared, but…Fafnir's will to protect the sorceress seems like a curse, and there was a report saying that attacks didn't reach at all."

Because of the rules, Fafnir couldn't participate in the game for a long time as he was a strong familiar. However, Fafnir's abilities and protection stayed even though Fafnir had gone. His will to protect Asia was particularly strong. A half-hearted attack wouldn't give any damage to Asia even if it was from a God. That was how strong Fafnir's feelings towards Asia were.

"Fafnir has always had this temperament of defending the best treasures for himself until the very end since long ago after all."

Vidar-san explained it thus. Now that I thought about it, his origin was also from Norse mythology . …And like so, it had turned into an awful situation. Vidar-san and Apollon-san, two great chief Gods were in front of me, and even Typhon, the King of Monsters, was here too. Even if I could still use my Dragon Deification for the fight against them…it was impossible to take three of them on at once. However, my team didn't have any remaining strength to fight them as my comrades had retired. Now, I could either fly and aim for the top of Yggdrasil, or…. But they wouldn't forgive me for doing such things… I took a glance at Rossweisse-san. The fight against Brynhildr-san was certainly close, but I didn't think that she would lose. If Rossweisse-san's barrier magic worked, we could certainly win. I mean, I also wanted to use that barrier magic here, but…I guess I couldn't afford to say such things, huh?

…….

…Checkmate? No, no, I can't afford to give up here! I had already decided that I would win. It wouldn't have any meaning if I didn't win! If I didn't win…Vidar-san would take Rossweisse-san away from me! I have to somehow manage to avoid that. At the very least, even if it's only Vidar-san… No, no, no, it shouldn't be like that! I have to win if I fight! I can still fight! I still have the power and stamina to keep fighting! …But, it's not enough. The fighting power isn't enough! If only two more people… no, if even one of my comrades could fight together with me here, then it might be…! Such thoughts streamed through my mind. The counter [8] on the gem of my right gauntlet would soon reach zero. …This is…what did it mean? I didn't quite understand… Ddraig, who was inside me, suddenly then said.

[…I see, I finally understand. Partner, that counter is…]

After that, the counter turned to zero and my gems all shone with a brilliant light that I had never seen before! Deep crimson light — was released from the gems on my armor! The irradiated light started to take the form of something! And then, what appeared in front of my eyes…was a giant red Dragon! It was the form of a majestic red Dragon that seemed familiar—. The Dragon looked surprised as it glanced around everywhere. The commentator screamed.

<<Wow! A red Dragon has suddenly appeared on the field! We are now searching through documents and checking with experts, but…>>

The guest commentator said.

<<This, isn't this the [Welsh Dragon]!? It looks like the Red Dragon Emperor written down in legends himself!>>

It was just as the commentator said… Yes…that red Dragon was Ddraig himself whom I had met several times before!

"Ddraig!?"

The red Dragon looked at me — and grinned widely.

"Yeah, partner. It's me. The Red Dragon Emperor Ddraig!"

—!

…….

…Kuuuuuuuuuuuuuuu! Is this real!? For Ddraig to appear here in front of my eyes with a real body at the last moment! Ddraig said.

"It seems like this is the effect of the miracle drug. I don't really know, but it seems like the power that was sealed within the Sacred Gear has been temporarily released."

"But, even though Ddraig appeared there, I am still wearing my armour!"

Ddraig grinned as he said.

"It means that we are still connected. What, you and I being separate is something that doesn't exist, partner. We have come this far together after all."

“That’s right, isn’t it!”

I didn’t know the reason why Ddraig was released. However, what’s certain was that this only could have happened because of us growing and experiencing things together! I stood side-by-side with Ddraig. There were two Red Dragon Emperors—. Ddraig confidently stepped in front of Typhon as he said.

“Now, I will be your opponent, Typhon. Since you were so provocative, I will happily be your opponent.”

Typhon even trembled in response to the appearance of Ddraig. He showed a look of joy that he hadn't before! Typhon-san laughed energetically.

[Kuhahahahahahahahahaha! That's the best! Who would've known that in this era and in this moment, I would be able to fight against the [Red Dragon Emperor Y Ddraig Goch]!?]

His gigantic body flew to the sky! In response, Ddraig also spread his wings and flew into the sky! The thick and ferocious aura that enveloped Ddraig's entire body even made the air feel cold! That was the aura of Ddraig! What an outrageous density of aura! It was equal to my Dragon Deification aura, or stronger perhaps—. Typhon controlled the weather as he produced a thundercloud in that particular area and tried to hurl bolts of lightning at Ddraig's gargantuan body! Ddraig took those lightning bolts head on without evading, but — the sparks simply ran through his giant body and basically didn't do any damage! Are you serious!? Those powerful bolts of lightning ended in that way!? Ddraig returned it by expanding his stomach and breathed fire from his mouth! The scale was so enormous that it covered the entire sky! Typhon tried to extinguish the fire by using a strong wind, but it didn't do anything to the fire as the whole body of the King of Monsters was bathed in it! The body of the King of Monsters was scorched by the flames of a Heavenly Dragon!

[Nuguuuuu! What powerful flames!]

It penetrated! Ddraig's attack penetrated Typhon!

"I won't let you!"

The Sun God Apollon-san flew towards Ddraig in a flash as he released his divine aura or light at the same time! Ddraig warped the trajectory of the divine aura by flapping both his wings at once and counter-attacked by unleashing his draconic aura! Apollon-san created a defensive magic circle in front of him, but it was easily destroyed and he got hit by the abominable draconic aura! The Sun God was blasted all the way to Yggdrasil! A part of Yggdrasil was even hollowed because of the force! Apollon-san was shocked as he separated himself from Yggdrasil.

"Impossible! For someone to be able to break through my defensive barrier!"

Ddraig proudly said

"Did you forget? [Boost] and [Penetrate] are my original abilities. I can increase the power of my flames and aura, and make it 'penetrate' as it hits you just like that."

Yes, that was Ddraig's specialty. The original abilities that dwelled in my Sacred Gear… The commentator screamed.

<<The Legendary Heavenly Dragon Ddraig has reviveeeeeeeeeeeeeed! What a surprise! Who would have expected that things would turn out like this! There are two Red Dragon Emperors — and the system's result as to what the organisers think about Ddraig's revival has come out!>>

My heart pulsed rapidly! The revival of Ddraig was certainly a good thing, but he wasn't registered as my team member, and he was also not my familiar! This situation, how would it be evaluated!? The commentator then informed us.

<<W-Well, as the Red Dragon Emperor Ddraig originally dwelled within Hyoudou

Issei-senshu's Sacred Gear, he is considered to be the same individual. And because of that, even if the Heavenly Dragon Ddraig has appeared, it will be treated as one of Hyoudou Issei-senshu's new abilities! That's what it means! In other words, it's acceptable from the tournament organisers' point of view! What a thing it has turned out to be! In this situation, there are two Heavenly Dragons!>>

Ohh! So it's acceptable! Well, what appeared was something that originally dwelled inside me after all. I think it's as the organisers said. However, I did also feel that it was somehow unfair! Ddraig laughed as if there was no enemy that could stand up to him as he said to Typhon and Apollon-san.

"Do you want to find out once again? —Just how strong I as a Heavenly Dragon once was in this world!?"

Ddraig continuously attacked Typhon! The flames and aura that Ddraig released were mixed with the power to [Double] and [Transmit], so everything pierced into Typhon at full power!

[Guuuuuuuh! Ddraig! You are really interesting, aren't you!]

Despite taking damage, Typhon laughed in joy as if he was enjoying this from the bottom of his heart! In the sky that surrounded the artificial Yggdrasil, the fellow legendary monsters started to attack each other flashily! Ferocious flames and bolts of lightning on a mythological level, enveloped almost the entire sky! The attacks, which were sufficient enough to cover the entire field, were repeated over and over again, and the intense battle escalated into one that was on a mythological level! Even though it was a fake, those attacks even shook the gigantic Yggdrasil! Vidar-san yelled.

[Apollon! Just follow Typhon like that! The burden of taking Ddraig on is too heavy! If our [King] is defeated, it's the end!]

Indeed, Typhon was the [King]. If he was defeated, the game would end there. It would be our win. I was sure that their team wouldn't let Typhon lose easily. But even if they didn't say so, it was something that I knew.

"I know! But!"

[Gahahahaha! It's fun! This is too fun, Ddraiiiiiiiiiiiig!]

Unexpectedly, the violent fight continued as he became obsessed, but Apollon-san couldn't find an opening to get in!

[You've always been a fighting maniac since a long time ago, Typhon! Very well! As my newly revived body is a bit dull, I will have you be my warming-up opponent!]

However, since Apollon-san couldn't leave Typhon as was, he also participated. And even though Ddraig fought against both Typhon and Apollon-san, he still managed to wreck them! —Then, a cross-shaped holy aura was fired off at Apollon-san! It was Cross Crisis! Looking at the source — a battered Xenovia stood on the staircase of Yggdrasil while wielding Durandal and Excalibur! She came here, huh! While Xenovia emitted an aura that was filled with the intention to fight, she said to Apollon-san.

"…Sun God, why don't we continue our fight from earlier until all strength is depleted

from my body?”

Xenovia who was panting said so bravely! Looking at the tough form of Xenovia, Apollon-san also laughed and made a bitter smile.

“I see, so the [Knight] of Sekiryuutei-dono is immortal in every aspect, huh.”

The second fight between Apollon-san and Xenovia began! …If Ddraig and Xenovia were to fight, then I could also concentrate. Once again, I faced off against Vidar-san who shrugged.

[No, no, this is not good. To think that there would be two Red Dragons in this situation. We’ve suddenly lost sight of the situation. But, we still have our own fight, right?]

I replied with ‘Yes’ in response to Vidar-san’s words. Oh, that’s right! This is the perfect time! I should just say this while we have this momentum! I took a deep breath as I screamed with a loud voice.

“Rossweisse-san, hear me out!”

As I prepared myself, I declared to Rossweisse-san with a loud voice!

“ROSSWEISSE-SAN! PLEASE GIVE BIRTH TO MY CHILDDDDDD! PLEASE GIVE BIRTH TO MANY, MANY OF MY CHILDREN!”

Vidar-san was expected to have a heir by everyone. And Rossweisse-san was chosen as his partner. …I can’t let that happen! Rossweisse-san was…someone important! Rossweisse-san stopped her attacks in response to my sudden confession as her face reddened!

“I-I…”

Rossweisse-san screamed towards the sky!

“I WILL GIVE BIRTH TO YOUR CHILD! PLEASE LET ME GIVE BIRTH TO MANY OF ISE-KUN’S CHILDREN!”

—! That was an ‘OK’! I got the OK from Rossweisse-sannnnnnn! I then turned to Vidar-san.

“And as you heard, I am sorry, but…I will make Rossweisse-san my bride! Because she just promised that she will give birth to my child!”

Vidar-san was dumbfounded by the series of events, but after he processed the information—.

[…Pfft.]

He suddenly burst into laughter.

[Ahahahahahahahhahahahahahahahahaha! I see, I see! So you just promised to let her give birth to your child, huh! And also, you confessed that right in front of me, huh! That really hurts!]

I thought that he would fuss over it, but Vidar-san lightly said.

[Okay. It's enough for me to hear Rossweisse-san's real opinion and the Sekiryuutei breaking through his doubts. Well, I didn't originally have any intention of marrying her though.]

Are you serious!? You didn't have any intention to marry!? So I was set up!? Well, it's fine as I have no regrets after the confession. In fact, I felt refreshed.

[Let's end the matter of Rossweisse-san here. —But, Sekiryuutei, the match is different right?]

Vidar-san got into an offensive stance.

[It doesn't matter if Rossweisse-san will be your bride or not, our fight is a different thing. —If you are a man, a long-cherished battle is where we will fight while betting each other's pride over a woman or another. Don't you think so too?]

"…Although I do enjoy fighting for the sake of girls, I also like fighting against fellow guys with no hard feelings like this, you know!"

And then, the final stage of the fight between Vidar-san and I began! As I punched him, Vidar-san also kicked me repeatedly! My punch hit Vidar-san head's, and Vidar-san's kick pierced my stomach! Because each attack was filled with an unbelievable mass of aura, our armours cracked, and the impacts even reached our bodies, causing us to throw up blood from our mouths. As I was punching him, I said.

"Magic, you aren't using it! You are only doing hand-to-hand combat!"

Vidar-san continued to kick me as he answered.

[Nope, I am using it! I am buffing my body's abilities with strengthening magic! I also shrouded each of my kicks in magic! But I still can't defeat you! Seriously, just what kind of a person are you!?]

As I punched Vidar-san, I spoke in response to his words!

"I am the Oppai Dragon!"

[I see! Well, that's pretty easy to understand!]

We continued the intense exchange of punches and kicks from there and took distance from each other. The violent fight pushed the floating island past its limit as the small foothold that was left got destroyed. Vidar-san and I breathed hard. I mean, we dropped to our knees and rested. The armour could be repaired many times, but our bodies inside received so much damage that we were completely worn out. I couldn't tell where the injuries were as I felt extreme pain throughout my whole body. Vidar-san stood up and focused his aura on his feet.

[Let's decide this soon. With our trump cards!]

Vidar-san jumped! I felt like he was going to use that crazy move again! This is the end, huh. I expanded my four cannons as I gathered a crazy amount of aura. As it rumbled 'Douuuu…', the power of crimson and jet-black concentrated on all four of my cannons! Vidar-san deployed magic circles in the sky as footholds for the second time, and made a stance to release his secret kick move! The aura of my cannons had also gathered enough! Me and the chief God of Norse mythology, we both

started to move!

[Shoot!]

[Maximum Charge!!]

Vidar-san's body was enveloped with enormous aura along with that voice and, after assuming a kicking posture, he dived with a godly speed! At the same time—.

"[<<D∞D D∞D D∞D D∞D D∞D D∞D D∞D D∞D D∞D D∞D D∞D D∞D!!!!!!!!>>]"

An [∞] symbol appeared on all of the gems of my armour as the colours of red and black flashed alternatingly.

"Let's gooooooooooooooooooooooo!"

"[<< ∞ Blaster!!!!!! >>]"

An absolute bombardment was released from my four cannons…

[—Fimbulvetr Shot!]

Vidar-san's kick…somehow managed to keep up with the ∞ bombardment that was released from my canons! Damn! Are you serious!? Even though that was the trump card of Dragon Deification, for it to not be able to defeat Vidar-san's kick! This was God-class! If my opponent was a God who surpassed that, even ∞ Blaster wouldn't be enough, huh! Well, even though I was sure that he was also using the armor! I — had resolved myself. I had decided that if I fired it, my stamina would be completely depleted and there was a chance that I wouldn't be able to move. But, if I didn't use it here, then I might not be able to defeat Vidar-san! And, there is also another reason why I must win! Dad said it to me before the match began.

—Mum was beginning to say that she might come to see the tournament if you qualify for the main stage. She said that 'If my own son qualified for the main tournament, I can't afford to not come and not see the tournament.' Beyond this point — after this win, after I win against Vidar-san, the wonderful thing was that mum would probably come and see my matches! Please grant my wish! I want mum to witness my activity in the near future! I began to prepare for the forbidden move — Longinus Smasher. As crimson aura gathered at my chest, the hole for firing opened.

"Longinus Smasherrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr!"

"[<<Longinus Smasher!!!!!!!!!>>]"

The Infinity Blaster + Longinus Smasher from the fight against Apophis! The enormous aura mixed with the bombardment of Infinity Blaster as the mass of the power exceeded my imagination was finally able to crumble Vidar-san's kick as it swallowed the chief god of Norse mythology.

—Or so I thought, but Vidar-san instantly responded by dodging my two strongest frontal bombardments! They didn't hit! But this was also within my calculations. My most powerful attack — it's only natural that he would look out for it. Dodging it was the best move. And it was performed by Vidar-san. But, I had also taken Vidar-san's move into account! The moment I ended my bombardments, without any delay, I sent the power of Dragon Deification to Ascalon that had been stored in my gauntlet

towards Vidar-san — Ascalon ejected in its entirety! The main idea was like the time I tossed Ascalon to Xenovia! I had strengthened Ascalon with [Boost] on its natural [Dragon Slayer] trait, and it flew out towards Vidar-san at high speed! Vidar-san, who had received damage from the two bombardments, had Ascalon thrown towards him, but with the determination to endure the damage, Vidar-san forcefully kicked the Holy Sword away!

[Gah! The wave of the Holy Sword even went through the armor…!]

Vidar-san said with an anguished look. That's right! Since that Ascalon had been endowed with [Penetrate], the damage reached Vidar-san! But, I didn't end it just like that! It will be decided here! My desire that is! And also for the sake of my team who had fought for this moment!

"GOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!"

I — shot my other sword, Ascalon II! Of course, I endowed it with the power of [Boost] and [Penetrate]! The former ∞ Blaster, Longinus Smasher, Ascalon, [Boost], [Penetrate], [Dragon Slayer]… And finally, Ascalon II! I used all of my powers! My weapons weren't just ∞ Blaster and Longinus Smasher! As if he had reached his limit, Vidar-san couldn't react well to Ascalon II that flew towards him at high speed, but still, he made a kicking posture!

[… OOOOOOOH!]

Vidar-san cried as he tried to kick Ascalon II away.But perhaps because Vidar-san had reached his limit, he couldn't get his feet up as Ascalon II pierced through his stomach. The next moment, the armour of Midgardsormr was destroyed completely, and Vidar-san was enveloped in the light of retirement.

[… So this is a Heavenly Dragon!]

Vidar-san left those words with satisfaction as he vanished from the field.

<<From the [Leisure of the Kings] Team, the [Rook] has retired.>>

Vidar-san disappeared into the light of retirement while the fight near me also looked like it was about to finish. With incredible precision, Rossweisse-san used barrier magic just on the surroundings of Brynhildr-san's right foot, sealing her opponent's movement!

"I've been concentrating for this moment!"

Brynhildr-san tried to destroy the barrier on her foot with magic attacks, yet it didn't even budge. She was surprised by this.

"Kuh! What a solid magic seal! I can't see any cracks!"

Rossweisse-san raised the magic power of her offensive magic with the wand in one of her hands and yelled

"When it comes to offense, defense and support, I fall behind you in the degree of perfection in all aspects of magic. However, I won't lose when it comes to barrier magic! Because this is the power that I gained after meeting my comrades!"

The Trihexa incident made the talent of Rossweisse-san's barrier magic bloom. In

that aspect, even against the strongest Valkyrie, there existed something that was beyond her power. The full blast of magic that was strengthened with the Misteltein wand engulfed Brynhildr-san—.

<<From the [Leisure of the Kings] Team, one [Knight] has retired.>>

As the strongest Valkyrie vanished into the light of retirement, we heard.

<<From the [Leisure of the Kings] team, the retirement of the [King] has been confirmed.>>

—! As we heard that information, I looked to the sky, where the light of retirement appeared before Ddraig. It must've been Typhon's retirement light. Amazing, that Ddraig, he really beat Typhon huh! Ddraig, whose body was pretty worn out, showed me a grin.

"I've said it before right, Partner? That there is no one stronger than me and Albion."

After he said that, Ddraig's body turned into a mass of red light. And in the following moment, the light burst, leaving behind only particles. And then, I could feel Ddraig's presence inside my Sacred Gear again. Ddraig then talked to me through the Sacred Gear.

[Well, it seems like there is a time limit.]

Aah, the situation returned to the original. But, it's enough. As the opposing team's King [Typhon] was defeated and it meant our win, Apollon-san stopped attacking. After I waved my hands to my comrades who were tired and collapsed, I flew into the sky. Going higher and higher.

<<As the [King] of [Leisure of the Kings] team has retired, the resignation of the [Leisure of the Kings] team is confirmed. The win goes to the [Sekiryuutei of the Blazing Truth] Team.>>

We heard the announcer's report of our win. Instantly, there were many cheers from the spectators' seat towards us.I arrived at the top of Yggdrasil. From the scenery that could be seen from there…there wasn't anything that caught my eye as it was artificial, but…I felt deeply moved. I won against…a team that had several strong Gods in it..As it was such an immense result, I was sure that it would boost my confidence.

"Ise-kun!"

Rossweisse-san followed me as she flew to the top. Although her body was ragged, the expression on Rossweisse-san's face seemed to show that she had accomplished something in defeating her senior. I grasped Rossweisse-san's hand as we looked at the artificial Yggdrasil together. Rossweisse-san then said to me.

"N-Next time, let's watch the real world tree Yggdrasil…"

Her face became red! It's so cuteee! Moreover, it was an invitation to a date. I tightened my grip on her hand and said as I smiled.

"Yes, I'll look forward to it!"

This match…was our golden star…

And then, not long after this, the last preliminaries for the first Rating Game World Tournament [Azazel Cup] ended, and it came down to the decision of who would participate in the main tournament…

New Dark.
From the Outside of the World

After his son's match ended, Hyoudou Issei's father — Hyoudou Gorou, left the authorised personnel spectator room of the stadium along with Kunou, Ophis and Lilith. As they walked along the hall, Gorou felt that something wasn't right as his vision distorted and his whole body lost strength. When he realised it, all of the spectators' cheers had vanished. The hall was filled with silence. There wasn't a single sign of life. As he continued along the lifeless and silent hall, he finally reached a space which was slightly wider. Kunou, Ophis, and Lilith walked in front and took their stance as if they were protecting him. The three of them faced forward. Kunou especially was vigilant as she made a grim expression. Then, several mysterious hooded figures came out from their hiding spots. Their faces looked like skulls under the hood, and they also held scythes in their hands. Gorou assumed that they were truly Grim Reapers. The Grim Reapers looked at them — towards Ophis and Lilith as they spoke.

<<This is our first meeting, oh Dragon of Infinity.>>

Kunou lashed out against the Grim Reapers.

"You guys! You are from the Netherworld, right!? What do you want!?"

She sounded brave saying those words, though Gorou knew that Kunou was trembling. Despite the fact that she was not human, she was still a kid. After taking a deep breath, Gorou stood in front of Kunou, Ophis, and Lilith. He then screamed to the Grim Reapers.

"H-Hey! You people! W-W-What do you want from these girls? They are my precious children that I look after! I won't let you t-touch them!"

He declared whilst trembling. Gorou laughed with pretense as he said to Kunou and others.

"Hahaha, I am actually a-afraid, but I am the father of the Sekiryuutei. Protecting you guys is something that I have to be able to do."

Of course, there was no way that he could win against the Grim Reapers. There was a chance that his son or his son's comrades would not be able to come to their aid either. Still, because he looked at the sight of his son who was very brave, he couldn't pull back. He thought that if he pulled back now, he would not be able to call himself the father of the Sekiryuutei. The Grim Reapers pointed the blades of the scythes at them.

<<The father of Sekiryuutei, huh? This is good. Let's take our revenge for Thanathos-sama.>>

<<But, we can't let our guard down as the Dragon who holds the power of Infinity is here. Let's stick to the plan and prepare to summon the [Dragon Eater] Samael —.>>

It was at that moment. They heard a voice which interrupted the Grim Reapers'

conversation.

“You might want to give it a rest. Those guys are important to us after all.”

Did my son’s comrades arrive?

Gorou turned his body towards the voice as if he barely escaped death. A young man wearing a blue suit over his entire body like the ones you would usually see in science-fiction movies and a girl wearing a blue dress were standing there. Gorou had the impression that they were both young and around the same age as his son Issei. On both of his hands were gauntlets…or something like that equipped. The Grim Reapers looked like they were surprised by their entrance as they turned their gazes away from their supposed target and instead glared at them. One of the Grim Reapers spoke.

<<… For something like this to happen at such a time. —[First Dark], no, Kanzaki Mitsuya of [Cross Times Kiss].>>

The young man giggled in response to the Grim Reaper’s words as he said to the young girl behind him.

“Kirino-san, you don’t have to do anything. Even if our opponents aren’t ultimate-class, they must at least be part of the upper echelons. —This is a good chance. Shall we make an example out of them to show the rulers of Hell who they’re messing with?”

The young man took out — a blue terminal. As he slid a part of the gauntlet that was equipped on his left hand, a space to insert something was revealed, and he inserted his terminal there. As he touched the screen of the terminal, a faint blue light was released and spread to every corner of the room. The uneasy feeling that filled the room instantly disappeared. The Grim Reapers stirred in response to this.

<<—! It’s [Innovate Clear]!>>

“It’s just the simple version though. With this, this whole area is now mine. Now, I guess I will use another one.”

The young man — took out another terminal. It was tinged with a jet-black colour. As the Grim Reapers visually recognised the terminal machine, they became more alert.

<<Don’t tell me that it also remains in your…!>>

The Grim Reapers raised their guards. This time, the young man slid a part of the gauntlet on his right hand and inserted the jet-black tinged terminal machine into it.

[[Innovate Clear] and [Telos Karma].]

Suddenly, both of his gauntlets caused the space to shake and rumble with a ‘Dun Dun’ sound. His gauntlets started to emit an ominous teal and jet-black light that wrapped around the young man’s whole body.

[—Transcendental Arrive.]

As the young man said that—

[Innovate Clear Balance Breaker!]

[Telos Karma Balance Breaker!]

His gauntlets emitted machine-like voices. Immediately after that, both of them emitted a voice simultaneously.

<<[Transcendental Arriver!]>>

As the space behind the young man distorted, sparks crackled and something which resembled a powered exoskeleton appeared. The powered exoskeleton's head, body and limb parts then opened and latched onto the young man's body. The helmet was equipped on his head last. His whole body looked like it was clad in a futuristic powered-exoskeleton suit from sci-fi movies. Unlike the armor that his son Issei wore, Gorou felt that this one seemed much more machine-like. The Grim Reapers were surprised by the young man.

<<—!? T-This is, did you artificially awaken your Longinus' Balance Breakers….!?>>

The young man said as he stepped forward.

【—It's a technique called Transcendental Arrival.】

<<—! Even though it's a system created by the God of another mythology, how loathsome…! Damn humans!>>

One of the Grim Reapers was enraged and raised his scythe overhead as he charged towards the young man, ready to attack. It was when the Grim Reaper closed his distance and swung his scythe downwards. The attack clearly should have hit, but…the young man, who was in front of the Grim Reaper, was unscratched even though the edge of the scythe pierced the floor. As the Grim Reaper took out his scythe, he asked in confusion.

<<What did you do…? My attack should have hit you completely.>>

The young man shrugged as he answered.

【*I simply chose the option of that attack 'not hitting'.*】

The Grim Reapers were surprised upon hearing those words.

<<Don't tell me, that is…! 'That' ability really—>>

As the young man spread his hands, he pointed at his belt.

【At the very least, the phenomena caused by [Telos Karma] in this small world that was created with [Innovate Clear] are certain. Even a God-class being won't be able to oppose this.】

The young man then continued,

【—Welcome to my territory. It will only be for a short period of time, but please enjoy it.】

Gorou was horrified after hearing those words. It was because he felt something really dark from the tone of the young man's voice, who was about the same age as his son. The Grim Reapers then simultaneously rushed towards the young man with their scythes in hand.

<<Kuh! How about this!?>>

The swings and slashes of the scythes were so fast that Gorou couldn't follow them with his eyes. The young man evaded all of it just by slightly moving his fist. The blade of a certain Grim Reaper's scythe suddenly fell off from its handle as it clanged onto the ground with a metal-like sound. The Grim Reaper was dumbfounded as the blade broke off from its handle. The young man then said.

【This time, I chose the option of 'The scythe isn't in good condition'.】

<<…So that means we fell into a trap, huh. Damn you,[The man who impersonates God]…!>>

The Grim Reaper yelled to the young man angrily. While looking at the terminal machine, her phone, the young girl murmured.

"You mean a 'cheater'."

The young man shook his head.

【It's different. The other Longinus users are cheaters. I would call this a bug. As Longinus are called the 'bugs' of Sacred Gears, it fits perfectly, doesn't it?】

The Grim Reaper whose scythe was destroyed (Gorou interpreted it that way) made another scythe appear. Once again, he and his comrades assaulted the young man simultaneously. — However, the young man operated the gauntlet equipped on his left arm. Then, a blade-like light was created. As the young man slipped through the attacks, several trails of light were drawn. In an instant, there were numerous ruptures scattered all over the bodies of the Grim Reapers who had attacked, annihilating them. There wasn't a speck of dust left after that. The two remaining Grim Reapers flinched as they saw their friends annihilated without being able to do anything. One of the Grim Reapers maliciously pointed his blade towards Gorou and the others as he wielded his scythe!

<<If that's the case, then at least the parent of the Sekiryuutei!>>

He leaped with high speed and got closer. Gorou braced himself as he felt that his life was in danger. Someone then stood in front of Gorou. It was a girl with black hair — Ophis. Ophis handled the Grim Reaper that came to attack by slapping him!

BAN!

The Grim Reaper vanished along with a parched voice! Ophis said to the Grim Reaper who had completely vanished.

"I won't allow it. Whoever it may be."

Gorou was also surprised by Ophis's bravery. Kunou, who was beside him, opened her mouth widely in surprise as well. After the young man operated a part of his gauntlet, the powered exoskeleton started to detach.Then, as the weird atmosphere that filled the room vanished, they could once again hear the cheerful sounds of the spectators from the Rating Game's venue. Gorou thought 'I don't really understand, but it looks like space has returned to normal'. The young man addressed the last remaining Grim Reaper.

“Hey, Grim Reaper-san over there. Go back and tell Hades this; if I am in your list of targeted Longinus wielders, we will also come up with something. After all, you’re the ones who started all of this.”

The last Grim Reaper quickly fled while hatefully glaring at the young man. As the dangerous fellow left, Gorou stroked his chest in relief.

“Y-You saved us there. By the way, w-who are you…?”

As the young man replied, he revealed a gentle smile which seemed appropriate for a boy his age.

“—We go by the name of [Cross Times Kiss], but I guess that is meaningless in this [World] as it looks like the name [First Dark] is more popular here. My name is Kanzaki Mitsuya, and because of certain reasons, we will be closely guarding you and your wife during the tournament. That person over there is [Able], my colleague Kirino Shizuka-san.”

That young man, Kanzaki, looked at the young girl behind him. As their gazes met, she slightly bowed to them. The young girl then asked Kanzaki as she approached.

“…Is it really true that we can get hold of information about [Evie Etoulde] just by helping these guys? After all, our faction is an enemy of Maou Beelzebub.”

“Well, who knows. But, it seems like Hades is really trying to become the guardian of this world. I am pretty sure even we wouldn’t want to get involved in that if he can take advantage of the Maous.”

“… Whichever it is, we can’t go back to that [Game] without getting something first.”

The conversation was completely incomprehensible to Gorou…but then Kanzaki looked in his direction.

“I understand. For now, if we can get closer to the people who are close to Sekiryuutei, then at the very least…”

“…All right. I am fine with it as long as I can get the [Bonus] after thirty years.”

—Suddenly, another voice was heard.

“…I guess for now, I will just say my greeting, you with the forbidden name, Kanzaki Mitsuya.”

Everyone turned towards the source of the voice. It was the figure of a familiar young man. A young man who had brought his black dog along. Gorou then remembered that he was a friend of his son Issei, Ikuse Tobio. Kanzaki cocked his eyes as he saw Ikuse Tobio. He then laughed cheerfully.

“Yeah, I guess this is our first greeting, Slash Dog Ikuse Tobio.”

With a vigilant expression, Ikuse Tobio said.

“—[First Dark], the nemesis of Maou Ajuka Beelzebub, the person who controls both the Longinus [Innovate Clear] and [Telos Karma]. The erased group [Cross Times Kiss]. And the human who comes and goes outside the reason of the world, huh…”

Kanzaki shrugged.

“The deal that I made with Ajuka-sama says that I would only be cooperating during this Tournament.”

Ikuse Tobio looked at the terminal machine that Kanzaki possessed.

“…The Grigori views you as a very dangerous man. I’ve heard that if I were to break that, you won’t be able to remain on this side, is that right?”

“It’s exactly as you say. Able and I are weaklings full of weaknesses, you know?”

“You can certainly say that…”

As Kanzaki took out both terminal machines from his gauntlets, he said.

“—Everything is for the sake of [Innovate] and [Karma].”

There was a weird atmosphere between Ikuse Tobio and Kanzaki. The dog that Ikuse Tobio brought along also emitted a dangerous light from its eyes. Acting as a mediator, Gorou stepped in between them.

“N-Now, can you guys please stop fighting. See, I am also unharmed. You are…Ise’s friend, right? I remember seeing you a few times. If that’s true, could you please stop fighting here? I don’t know what happened between you two, but I don’t think he’s a bad person as he saved me and these girls.”

Ikuse Tobio lowered his head in response to Gorou’s words.

“…Fine, sorry for making a ruckus.”

Gorou was surprised by his frankness. The young woman, Kirino, lowered her head as well as she spoke.

“Thank you for sticking up for us. I am sorry that things had to turn out this way…”

The young woman looked like she was truly sorry. Gorou replied.

“It’s fine, young lady. Since my son is working hard in this world, a part of me has been prepared to get involved in these kinds of things. There was also the time when Vali-kun’s scary grandfather targeted us.”

It was impossible for him to forget the day he learned the truth about his son, the day that their family bond had grown stronger. It was terrifying, but still, thanks to that, he was able to learn the truth about his son and the people around him. Even if he were to relive such terrifying memories again, he was sure that there wouldn’t be any better life as long as he could see his own son’s true form. That was why Gorou decided he would try to smile for the sake of his children, regardless of the terrifying things that he saw. He wanted to say that no matter how terrifying the situations that he encountered were, he would be fine. As if Kanzaki also felt this, he bowed his head as well.

“…I am really sorry. But, now that I have met you, my determination has been hardened. —During the tournament, I will protect you and your wife.”

He didn’t really understand, but he knew that some great people were prepared to

guard him and his wife. He would learn more about what kind of person he was from now on, but Gorou decided that he would try to believe in him for now, and so he replied with a ‘thank you’ for protecting them against the scary Grim Reapers. Kanzaki then added as he remembered something.

“Ah, that’s right.”

He whispered to Gorou.

(…Please, don’t speak of this matter to your son’s junior Nakiri-kun yet. Because I have something to take care of with him.)

Nakiri… The image of his son’s junior came across his mind. Gorou, who didn’t know about the situation, replied with ‘All right’. Kanzaki then declared to Ikuse Tobio. . “[Slash Dog], I promise you this. —We will definitely protect the Sekiryuutei’s parents. With a dad this nice, I will be punished if I don’t protect him.”

The young girl, Kirino, enviously said.

“…And from who would that punishment come from, I wonder? Also, are you not going to watch the match of [Star Buster]-kun?”

Kanzaki sighed in response to Kirino’s question.

“He won’t have any problems. But he sure is a problematic kid.”

Kanzaki then reached out for a handshake with Ikuse Tobio. Ikuse Tobio hesitated for a moment, but…he returned the gesture. While they shook hands, Kanzaki then laughed suggestively as he said.

“—[Innovate], Ikuse Tobio. Also, Hyoudou Issei-kun and Vali Lucifer. In order to ruin the evil Gods’ plan. And then, for the sake of surviving against Melvazoa that will come in thirty years.”

[DxD]… [DOG]…and also, [Dark]…

The ambition of the God of the Netherworld Hades had moved the Dark of the Longinus that shouldn’t be touched. Behind the tournament, everyone’s speculations became extremely chaotic.

Longinus

Existing / Thirteen Species of Longinus / User

<<True Longinus>> High-tier Longinus/Relic (Holy Spear) — User Cao Cao

<<Zenith Tempest>> High-tier Longinus — User Dulio Gesualdo

<<Annihilation Maker>> High-tier Longinus — User Leonardo

<<Dimension Lost>> High-tier Longinus — User Georg

<<Boosted Gear>> [Sealed Heavenly Dragon] — User Hyoudou Issei

<<Divine Dividing>> [Sealed Heavenly Dragon]— User Vali Lucifer

<<Canis Lykaon>> — User Ikuse Tobio

<<Sephiroth Graal>> Relic (Holy Cup) — User Valerie Tepes

<<Incinerate Anthem>> Relic (Holy Cross) — User Lint Selzan

<<Regulus Nemea>> — User Regulus (Master Sairaorg Baal)

<<Absolute Demise>> — User Lavinia Reni

<<Innovate Clear>> — User Kanzaki Mitsuya (1)

<<Telos Karma>> — User Kanzaki Mitsuya (1)

New (2) / Five Classified Species of Longinus / User

<<Aeon Balor>> (3) — User Gasper Vladi

<<Alphecca Tyrant>> Relic (Holy Nail) — User TBA

<<Unknown Dictator>> (4) —User TBA

<<Nereid Kyrie>> High-tier Longinus — User TBA

<<Star Buster Star Blaster>> (5) High-tier Longinus — User Shooting Star (real name unknown)

(1) Is the person currently using it, though the official user is unknown.

(2) Is the newly observed Longinus species within the last twenty years that are added into the record this time. There has never been a time where five Longinus appeared within the short span of twenty years.

(3) Has been registered as a different species because of the deviated ability from <<Forbidden Balor View>>

(4) A Longinus that can control machines and electrical devices is a completely new

species.

(5) A Longinus-class Sacred Gear consisting of a sword and gun.

These are all of the eighteen Longinus species that are currently recorded. The users of this generation have all attained Balance Breaker or beyond. There has never been an era like this, and according to the researchers of Sacred Gear system:

‘This time, why don’t we make the system this way in case unprecedented things happen?’

Such views continue to be regarded as very likely.

Qualifying Team

After all preliminary matches for the first Rating Game World Tournament [Azazel Cup] had ended, the announcement for the teams that made it to the main stage took place at the floating city of Agreas in the Underworld, which was regarded as the sacred territory of the Rating Games. The commentator, Naud Gamigin, along with another guest commentator, livened up Agreas Stadium. Even though there was no match, the spectators were pushing each other as the entire stadium was completely filled. As the media from every mythology was covering the event, the announcement started.

<<The sixteen teams that are going to the main stage have been decidedddddddddd! And we will announce them soon!>>

As Naud Gamigin roared, the giant monitor on the stadium started to show the first team.

<<We will be starting from the first team who qualified for the main stage without a single loss! They are said to be the team that is the closest to becoming the winners! The team that consists of Gods that Sakra A.K.A Indra leads, [Vajra]! >>

He participated in the Tournament where Gods from every other mythology joined in order to show off his power. While everyone withdrew from the tournament as their spirit withered because of the mighty monsters and brutal Sacred Gears, this God of War, on the other hand, enjoyed that tendency. A team that focused on Buddhism and was accompanied by the Four Heavenly Kings (Dhrtarastra, Virudhaka, Virupaksa, Vaisravana) was one of the winning candidates since the beginning. The next team was then displayed.

<<The next team is one of the few teams who originate from the human world, and they have made an impact not only against Ultimate-class Devils' teams, but also the supernatural beings! From the same mythology as the God Indra, Mount Meru, the team led by Sakra's vanguard A.K.A Cao Cao-senshu, [Spear of the Heavenly Emperor] is chosen to participate in the main stage as well!>>

Starting from Cao Cao who wielded the strongest Longinus, they were the team that consisted of people who challenged humanity's limits. The ability to transform a Sacred Gear into its Balance Breaker was both widely acknowledged and feared by supernatural beings. Not to mention that Guan Yu who joined forces with them gave them a big advantage.

<<The legendary trio who have been going strong in the preliminaries! A popular team from Mount Meru who has their own particular view on the world and keep gaining stars, [The Journey to the West] Team, is also going to the main stage!>>

Sun Wukong, Zhu Bajie, Sha Wujing, the former trio along with the heaven-sent child, Nezha, their synergy was incredible, allowing them to defeat Ultimate-class Devils and even Gods. The power of the legendary team was also legendary.

<<Mount Meru is really amazing. As expected of the God of War Indra who led them himself!>>

Mount Meru was the number one rivaled mythology even in the main stage, and those who once trained under Sakra showed just how much power the God of War had. The next team was displayed on the monitor.

<<The team with the King of Monsters, Typhon, as the [King], whose members are young prodigies and even chief Gods, [Leisure of the Kings]! It was even said that it would be weird if this team didn't qualify for the main stage!>>

Even though they suffered a defeat from the turbulent match against Hyoudou Issei's team, the team where the legendary King of Monsters participated along with the chief God of Asgard and Olympus had an unrivaled strength as they crushed the preliminaries with ease. With that lineup, they were also one of the favoured candidates. On top of that, there was a high chance that the Gods supporting them would join their team. Even now, it was still a team full of unknown factors.

<<From the Norse, the team that the flame giant Surtr-senshu leads, [Black]! The flames that he used to burn down God-class beings continues to rage on in the main stage!>>

The Legendary giant Surtr's team from the Norse mythology crushed the preliminaries. The flame giant was said to easily burn even Gods to the ground. This was one of the causes for the withdrawal of God-class beings from the tournament.

<<From the Hindu mythology is the team that unexpectedly suffered a defeat once, but besides that, they won all their matches, [Asura]! Leading the team is Mahabali, the Prince of the Asuras! It's impossible for them to not qualify for the main tournament! We are all expecting the match against Indra that we couldn't see in the preliminaries!>>

Even though the team of the Prince of the Asuras was defeated by the mysterious newcomer Devils Balberith and Verrine, they won the rest of their matches with an unwavering divine class as they were one of the winning candidates.

<<Next is the team that attracted the most attention among the Sacred Gear researchers! The [King] of mysterious Sacred Gear users, team [Shooting Star]. The frightening power of Shooting Star-senshu's sword and gun can even blow God-class beings away! >>

The most unexpected team. A dark horse that no-one anticipated. Since the middle of the tournament, they were the team marked by everyone in the last stage of preliminaries as their Sacred Gear abilities got stronger. Their team also became a hot topic among the mythologies as their members weren't just Sacred Gear users, but strong people whose names were still unknown as well. Who in the world were they, and why hadn't they been noticed until now? Their goal for winning was — to be able to live without having to worry about starvation. Their goal was the smallest amongst all the teams that crushed the preliminaries. However, it was a story which could describe their past. —Why didn't anyone find them? These talents, these outstanding talents that didn't have any social position, went on a rampage at the tournament as they proved the real meaning of it to every single mythology that participated. And then, there was another dark horse—.

<<Since the team [Black Satan of Darkness Dragon King] had several strong supporters join their team, they kept winning as they qualified for the main stage! The

unknown Devils starting from Balberith-senshu and Verrine-senshu surprised many spectators as they even defeated Gods!>>

The team that had the High-class Grim Reaper Zeno from the Netherworld as their [King]. Basically, they were a team with Grim Reapers and other monsters as their members. They didn't gather that much attention as their winning percentile was pretty low in the early stages of the preliminaries. However, ever since the middle of the preliminary stage, after they took the prodigious Devils Balberith and Verrine into their team, they continuously won and started to become one of the top competitors. They were one of the completely unexpected teams who made it through the preliminaries. Balberith and Verrine's combat potential was feared by many, and even God-class beings started to avoid them. On top of that, their team was still gathering atrocious Devils, which meant that their power hadn't been completely clarified.

<<From Heaven is of course the [Joker of Heaven] team who brazenly crushed the preliminaries! They will be going to the main stage!>>

<<Not only is their teamwork really great, but the influence of advisor Rudiger is tremendous. I am also looking forward to their tactics for the main stage.>>

While advisor Rudiger Rosenkreutz's direction was amazing, they also displayed great team synergy among all the participants. They were also a balanced team as they often won against high-ranked opponents.

<<Coming right up is one of the few teams who's like the [Spear of the Heavenly Emperor] team that originated from the human world! Once again, we can see a glimpse of the fierceness of a human who has mastered his Longinus! From the organization of Fallen Angels, Grigori, is the team that Ikuse Tobio-senshu, whose blade can even cut a God, leads, [Slash Dog]!>>

The Longinus that was able to cut even God was still going strong, and the ability of [Absolute Demise] to freeze everything made opposing teams fear them. This team was also great in their teamwork, and there weren't any openings from them. As the team was believed to have received blessings from Japanese Gods, the full extent of their power had yet to be seen.

And then, on the monitor, the Devils' team that had charged through the preliminaries and had gathered attention in the Underworld was introduced.

<<There are many teams from the Devils who are going to the main tournament as well! It's the origin of the Rating Game after all! Even if we're up against Gods, we can't afford to falter! The first team is this! Here they come, here they come, here they come! Anyway, it's only natural that they would come! The team that the Rating Game Champion Diehauser Belial leads, [Babel Belial]!>>

Even though they joined at the middle of the tournament, the team play of the champion was strong, regal and absolute. They kept gaining a series of victories as they got into the top class and brazenly beat even God-class beings, whirling through the preliminaries. While the real ability of Diehauser Belial was unquestionable, participants from all mythologies were confronted with the true essence of the Rating Games in the face of the Champion's bold and solid game play.

<<Coming up is a team that has become a hot topic due to the combination between

Holy and Devil Phoenix. We've also heard that the embodiment of the Immortal Bird Army even gave trouble to God-class beings! Another active professional player besides Emperor Belial who broke through the preliminaries is the team that the next successor of the Phoenix House Ruval Phoenix-senshu leads, [Phoenix]!>>

<<Not only do the members consist of the Holy and Devil Phoenix, the God from Egyptian mythology who is known as the ancestor of the Phoenix, the Immortal Sacred Bird Bennu, is also a part of that team! On top of that, there is also the notorious Sacred Gear user who controls mechanical equipment that showed us quite a scene!>>

<<Starting from Bennu-senshu, who has a connection with the Phoenix, there is a rumour of Egyptian Gods backing this team up.>>

The next head of the Phoenix clan, Ruval Phoenix, who was a top ranker even in the original Rating Games, scouted [Immortality], [Immortal Bird], and [Sacred Bird] beings from all over the world and successfully created a combination team to enjoy this international tournament. As a result, they made all mythologies strongly reaffirm the so-called concept of [Immortality]. A lot of people knew that if they gathered the [Immortality] that only God-class beings could beat, then they would become a force that wouldn't even be defeated by God-class beings. And there was another [Immortal] who had joined—.

<<And then, according to the new information that we just got, there is a possibility that the third son, Riser-senshu, who was eliminated in the preliminaries, will be joining this team as a player!>>

<<Players who held the [King] piece when they got defeated in the preliminaries are now able to join forces with the teams that will be participating in the main stage.>>

<<According to the rules, if a player belonged to a team that was eliminated in the preliminaries, it does not count as a double registration. What an interesting system! This means that players who lost in the preliminaries might unexpectedly reappear.>>

Indeed, there was a possibility that the people who didn't survive the prelims (there was a restriction on the number of who could come back) could become a member of a team that would be progressing to the main stage where they could shine again. In addition, it was possible for players to be recruited from the teams which had been eliminated from the main stage as well, although there were some strict limitations there. And the monitor continued to display the young Devils…

<<And first are these young prodigies! The team that the next head of the Bael clan, Sairaorg-senshu, leads, [Imperial Purpure]! Those fists can even smash a God!>>

The Fist of the Lion King that was said to be equal to a Maou-class Devil, and could supposedly even reach the Gods in this tournament. While there were times when he would be teased as the one-man army because of his unbelievably strong arms, the teamwork with his servants was also magnificent as there were only a few small mistakes. There were rumours that the team of the next head of Duke Agares' clan, Seekvaira Agares, who was eliminated in the preliminaries, would be joining their team, and it looked like the Lion King team would be rampaging in the main stage as well. Shown next on the monitor was — the colour of crimson.

<<And from the Rookies Four as well, the team that the next head of the Gremory Clan, Rias-senshu, leads, [Rias Gremory]! While their unity was a natural thing, the legendary Evil Dragon Crom Cruach-senshu, and the one who was titled the strongest human, Vasco Strada-senshu's existence is also immense!>>

Rias Gremory's team was strong with the Sekiryuutei, but they were also strong without him—. That girl drastically changed her own evaluation in the tournament. She was highly evaluated on the [Scout] field as she was able to take in Vasco Strada, who was said to have reached the utmost limits of humanity that no-one else had been able to reach, along with the ultimate Evil Dragon Crom Cruach, and two other Longinus users in her team, combining all their abilities together. Of course, her servants who followed her since the early days had also grown, making it one of the veteran teams.

<<These two teams aren't the only young Devils!>>

As Naud Gamigin yelled that, an animation of a red and white Dragon was displayed. The first to be displayed was — Vali Lucifer.

<<One of the Two Heavenly Dragons, the team that the White Dragon Emperor leads, [Hakuryuukou of the Morning Star], has been chosen to participate in the main tournament as well! It's fate for the person whose veins carry the blood of the first generation Lucifer to participate in the main stage of the World Tournament!>>

He was really popular as he was the direct descendant of Lucifer, the symbol of Devils, one of the Two Heavenly Dragons, Odin's adopted child, and above all else, the fated rival of the Oppai Dragon. Because of his overwhelming strength, and the fact that his comrades were a group of strong ruffians, their team received much attention. They were touted as one of the winning candidates. The last one to be introduced was — that man. The song was played on the entire stage—.

[Zoom Zoom Iyaa—n!]

What the monitor displayed along with the Oppai Dragon Song was — the Red Dragon Hyoudou Issei.

<<Of course! We can't afford to forget this man! No! It's impossible to forget him! One of the Two Heavenly Dragons, our Oppai Dragon! The team that the Sekiryuutei Hyoudou Issei leads, [Sekiryuutei of the Blazing Truth]!>>

[Oppai Dragon!]

[Oppai! Oppai!]

[Opaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaai!]

Regardless of age or gender, thunderous welcoming voices echoed through the arena. They were the most popular amongst all teams since their participation, and you could even say that they were the best team that had received support from a wide range of people.

<<The spectators are fired up as well! I am sure that you guys also remember their previous match where they crushed the team of one of the winning candidates [Leisure of the Kings]! We are also looking forward to unexpected rampages in the main stage!>>

Even though they were uneven in terms of the details and direction of their matches, they basically kept gaining wins and golden stars like when they defeated the [Leisure of the Kings] team, and they magnificently stepped up to reach the main stage. While the flashy power of their members was unchallenged, their tactics were also so great that they excited the spectators with the cleverness of their games. All mythologies were paying attention to them, especially to the destructive power of the black armor, and whether the resurrected legendary Heavenly Dragon Ddraig would be rampaging again. Displayed on the monitor were the sixteen teams that had been chosen to move on to the main stage, lined up next to each other.

<<Now, these are the sixteen chosen teams that are going to the main stage! With this, we announce the end of the long preliminaries, and the fierce tournament will soon begin with these sixteen teams! There can only be one winner! However, all teams are aiming to be the winner! Who will be the winner in this commemoration-worthy First Rating Game World Tournament? People of all mythologies, everyone, please look forward to the main stage that will begin soon!>>

The First Rating Game World Tournament [Azazel Cup]

Teams in the Main Draw

[Vajra]	[King] Sakra (Indra) / Gods and Buddhas	Mount Meru
[Spear of the Heavenly Emperor]	[King] Cao Cao / Human	Mount Meru/Mixed Mythologies
[Journey to the West]	[King] First Generation Sun Wukong / Gods and Buddhas	Mount Meru
[Leisure of the Kings]	[King] Typhon / Monster	Mixed Mythologies
[Asura]	[King] Mahabali / Gods and Buddhas	Hinduism (Asura Gods)
[Black]	[King] Surtr / Giants	Norse mythology
[Hakuryuukou of the Morning Star]	[King] Vali Lucifer / Human-Devil	Norse Mythology/Mixed mythologies
[Black Satan of Darkness Dragon King]	[King] Zeno / High-class Grim Reaper	Olympus/Mixed mythologies
[Joker of Heaven]	[King] Dulio Gesualdo / Reincarnated Angel	Heavens(Holy Bible)
[Slash Dog]	[King] Ikuse Tobio / Human	Underworld-Grigori/Mixed mythologies
[Babel Belial]	[King] Diehauser Belial / Devil	Underworld/Devil

[Phoenix]	[King] Ruval Phoenix / Devil	Mixed mythologies
[Imperial Purpure]	[King] Sairaorg Bael / Devil	Underworld/Devil
[Rias Gremory]	[King] Rias Gremory / Devil	Underworld-Devil/Mixed mythologies
[Sekiryuutei of the Blazing Truth]	[King] Hyoudou Issei / Devil-Dragon	Underworld-Devil/Mixed mythologies
[Shooting Star]	[King] Shooting Star / Human	Human World/Mixed mythologies

The fierce tournament will start with these sixteen teams. The brackets will be announced at a later date…

Gods of Hell

Part I

The leaders of Hell were holding a conference in a certain room inside Hades' research facility that was located in Cocytus. Malicious auras were emitted from every seat around the giant round table even though Hades was the only one sitting at it. Those auras were the phantoms of the rulers who were not present in that place as they projected only their consciousness to attend the meeting. The leaders were receiving a report from Hades' subordinates, the Grim Reapers. The Grim Reapers informed them.

<<The people that we are currently spying on are the agents of the Grigori and Maou Beelzebub's servant, [Slash Dog]… It seems like every mythology has also dispatched their intelligence operatives. Also…>>

<<It looks like the people of [Innovate Clear], the [Cross Times Kiss] group, have started to move.>>

One of the formless phantoms, the primordial God of Darkness Erebus from Greek mythology, reacted to this.

[They have finally started to move, huh? The whereabouts of those two Longinus. It seems like our cooperation and persistent searching finally paid off.]

<<What should we do?>>

Hades said in response to his underling's question.

<<Kanzaki Mitsuya. He is like…the dead. You could say that he is an existence that was assembled from human hatred and karma itself. He will be harmful even to Gods if he were to come in conflict with them. However, we shall eradicate all Longinus users.>>

One of the formless phantoms, the primordial God who ruled Hell, Tartarus, said.

{Oh, God of Death whose name is unknown, you had better remember this. At times, a human's curse is scarier than that of a God's. [First Dark] can possibly reform the human world. That guy is the unexpected person who attained the Balance Breaker of the detestable thirteenth Longinus, [Telos Karma].]

Erebus added.

[While Telos Karma is, there is also this rumour of the newly acknowledged Longinus being troublesome as well… As expected, the Longinus are indeed a threat. [DxD] and [X x X(Cross Times Kiss)]… As [ExE(Evie Etoulde)] approaches…we shall purge them once again.]

In response to that, another formless phantom, — God Erebus' sister, the Goddess of the Night Nyx, said.

[However, brother. I presume that sending the human world into chaos for those people and [the person who impersonates God] might also be entertaining.]

While the meeting of the Gods of Hell continued, one of the Grim Reapers whispered

an emergency report to Hades. Upon receiving the report, Hades told the Grim Reaper to <<Connect it here!>>. Then, a communication magic circle developed in the middle of the round table as the correspondent was projected into the air. What was displayed there was — the Sekiryuutei, Hyoudou Issei. Hades said.

<<My, [Sekiryuutei of the Blazing Truth]-dono. It looks like you successfully qualified for the main stage. First of all, a congratulation—>>

Hyoudou Issei interrupted his words as he said.

[I heard that you attacked my father?]

Yesterday, Hades' underlings, to be precise, the Grim Reapers from the Thanatos group, came into contact with Ophis and her other self without permission. There were also times where they would disobey Hades' orders. Not only that, but they also tried to summon the sealed Dragon Eater Samael. The Sekiryuutei was probably talking about that incident. The eyes of that young man — looked incredibly ferocious.

[There are some things that I have decided.]

The young man passionately stated.

[…There are times where I wonder about how many years I have left with my parents… Another thirty years? Forty years? The longest would probably be fifty years. I've been thinking about those things… At least, during those times, I would like to devote everything to them, or rather, I have decided that I will absolutely treasure them. I have sworn that to myself. That's why, if there is any improper shadow sneaking up on my parents, I have decided that I will try to prevent that. Even if you are monsters, terrorists…or even Gods, if you put my parents in danger —]

All of the Grim Reapers were breathless. The look in Hyoudou Issei's eyes made their minds and bodies shiver from the sheer coldness.

[I will beat you, whoever it is!]

—The master of the Netherworld Hades had infuriated Hyoudou Issei.

<<…….>>

<<…….>>

The phantoms of the siblings God Erebus and Goddess Nyx also wavered upon feeling his warning and intensity. He had defeated Vidar in the previous match, and had also resurrected the strongest Red Dragon Emperor in history, the Heavenly Dragon Ddraig. The masters of Hell in that place knew very well that he was not an enemy they could take half-heartedly as well. As the communication got cut, there was someone who laughed.

[Kuhahaha…]

A chaotic, jet-black phantom. That person was the evil God of Zoroastrianism, Angra Mainyu.

[What an interesting brat. I am looking forward to our meeting]

While the tournament progressed into the main stage, the rulers of hell, the movement of [Innovate Clear] and [Telos Karma] of [Cross Times Kiss], and the threatening shadows continued to intensify—.

Part 2

In the village prepared for the players of the Rating Game World Tournament. Balberith of the [Black Satan of Darkness Dragon King] Team was lost in thought in their lodging house. He was looking at the recording of the match in the player's room. The content was — the match between the [Sekiryuutei of the Blazing Truth] team and the [Leisure of the Kings] Team. As he watched the match, the jade-haired girl, Verrine, said.

"Ahahahaha! The Sekiryuutei won by saying boobs or oppai again! Even though he has the power of a transcendental being, it's surprising to see him win against the chief God of Norse mythology with incomprehensible power like oppai or boobs!"

On the other hand, Balberith, who was extremely focused on the Sekiryuutei's match, said.

"I don't know why, but…I cannot help but feel interested in this Hyoudou Issei."

After the teams going to the main stage had been decided, Balberith once again looked over the matches of every opposing team, but…since he was interested in the match of the Sekiryuutei A.K.A Hyoudou Issei, he also checked his previous matches against Bael, and also the match against the Phoenix that wasn't made public. And while at that, he replayed the recording many times as he paid attention to how Hyoudou Issei's expression changed and his power up in response to a female body's — breasts. Good grief, because of this series of incomprehensible things, Balberith had no choice but to be confused.. but for some reason, he also became interested.

—How does he get the power to defeat even Gods through his obsession with boobs?

Balberith was lost in thought. And then, he realised something.

"Chichi (boobs)… Chichi (father)… Don't tell me, they are the same…? No, but…!"

Verrine was also surprised by Balberith, who unusually put his hands on his head.

"W-What happened, Balberith?"

After getting lost in his thoughts for a while, Balberith murmured.

"…He might become our father."

"Huh? Balberith's boobs?"

Balberith made an expression as if he had gotten enlightenment in response to Verrine's words.

"Yes, my father."

—Another man (_ age) who had become captivated by Hyoudou Issei was about to be born again.

Team member 2

Sekiryuutei of the Blazing Truth
Team, members registered for the tournament (Registration when they broke through the preliminary rounds)

King	–––	Hyoudou Issei
Queen	–––	Bina Lessthan
Rook	–––	Nakiri Kouchin Ouryuu
Rook	–––	Roygun Belphegor
Knight	–––	Xenovia Quarta
Knight	–––	Shidou Irina
Bishop	–––	Asia Argento
Bishop	–––	Rossweisse
Pawn x2	–––	Ravel Phoenix
Pawn x3	–––	Bova Tannin
Pawn x2	–––	Elmenhilde Karnstein

The peerage of High-class Devil [Sekiryuutei of the Blazing Truth] Hyoudou Issei,
a member of Rias Gremory's peerage:

King	–––	Hyoudou Issei
Queen	–––	vacant
Rook	–––	Rossweisse

Rook	**---**	**vacant**
Knight	**---**	**Xenovia Quarta**
Knight	**---**	**vacant**
Bishop	**---**	**Asia Argento**
Bishop	**---**	**Ravel Phoenix**
Pawn x8	**---**	**vacant**

Next Life

“““““Nice job, everyone!”””””

We raised our glass for a toast.

After we finished the preliminaries of the Rating Game World Tournament, we invited not only all members of the Occult Research Club, but also team [DxD] and the people who had helped us, for a party in the Hyoudou residence! We used the underground training room as our party venue and called many people over. Aside from just Rias, my team members, dad and mom, we also invited Sona-senpai and her Sitri peerage, Sairaorg-san and others from the Bael peerage, Seekvaira-san and others from the Agares peerage, Dulio and other Reincarnated angels, the Slash Dog team, Riser and others from the Phoenix peerage, the Journey to the West team, and also Vali. And to my surprise, Cao Cao and others from the Hero Faction also came! Even though I didn’t think that they would come, I thought ‘I guess I’ll call all the people who have helped me over’, and when I invited him, he really came.

“Congratulations on qualifying for the main stage.”

“You too, congratulations.”

And such voices congratulating each other could be heard. What was amazing was that more than half of team [DxD] members’ teams were going to the main stage! Well, I was also surprised. Although the progress was turbulent, and there were more ups and downs than I expected, team [DxD] had produced a nice result. All of the mythologies were surprised, but also seemed to concur. The first generation Sun Wukong said.

“Hohoho, as expected, I knew that it would turn out like this. Even though you are young, you guys are the young people who fought against the Khaos Brigade head on and survived through that. Even if the enemy were an Ultimate-class Devil, Maou-class, or even God-class being, you guys would surely defeat them. If there weren’t any battle-maniac Gods, every member of [DxD] would be unstoppable by now.”

Jii-san’s evaluation looked like it was the same reason as to why the higher-ups of every mythology had approved of us. Considering that we were fighting continuously against terrorists and taking our Longinus abilities into account, it looked like we became quite a force to be reckoned with by each mythology. And to top that off, during the tournament, everyone got stronger and kept growing even now. We were

also told that the performance of the anti-terrorist team couldn't be any better by Ajuka Beelzebub-sama. It meant that if we kept increasing our strength, the number of people who would think and execute bad ideas would decrease. …Well, it seemed like there are still many people who are planning bad things on the other side though. And, on the opposite side of the party… There was a conversation between Rias and Sona-senpai.

"Rias, congratulations."

"Sona…it's a shame"

Indeed, the Sitri peerage was eliminated in the preliminaries. Even though Sona-senpai's tactics worked even against the upper-ranks, as expected, it seemed like the compatibility with the teams with great power was poor, and she didn't have enough wins to get her team into the main stage. Saji poured juice into my glass as he said.

"Damn, even though I wanted to fight against you once more in the main stage."

"Well, since the tournament isn't just a one-off, there will be another chance."

I replied like that. Actually, the Sitri peerage had moved on as they transitioned to get the data for the next time.

"Well, we are the support for other young Devils."

Seekvaira-san said. The Agares peerage was also eliminated in the preliminaries. Anyway, their luck on matching was bad as they fought only against higher-ranked opponents and struggled to win. In the end, it seemed like they didn't get the result they wanted. I was afraid of this tournament as there might be luck involved in the matching. Sairaorg said to me as he held a spare rib in one hand.

"How is it, Hyoudou Issei? Were you able to see the issues in the main stage?"

"Yes, there are lots of them."

After I unexpectedly blasted through the preliminaries, I became worried about Sakra's words. Using a communications magic circle, Sakra informed me.

[In the Gremory group, do you know the biggest difference between you and Rias Gremory? Rias Gremory is strong even without you. However, without Ravel, there are times when you wouldn't be able to function properly. That is a big difference ZE?]

…I…couldn't answer Sakra's words as I felt like what he said was true.

[Being able to use the Phoenix girl is good and all. However, you also have to be able to do a special move from now on. Your current condition will serve you alright in the preliminaries. —However, you might get matched with me in the main tournament, and when that happens, you won't be able to do anything in that condition, you know? It should be clear in your head now just how weak you were when you defeated Cao Cao in the Demonic Beast Riot.]

…To put it simply, like the time when I struggled against strong opponents, if I don't figure out a lot of ways to fight from now on, I won't even be able to aim to be the

winner. Although I mostly fought against high-ranked enemies… However, it's certain that I've relied too much on Ravel. …If I don't think more, and Ravel gets defeated in the middle of the match, our team might collapse. The stage we're about to enter is probably going to be like that. That's all the more reason for me to study as I might run into Rias's team in the main stage. As I once again renewed my determination, Vali, who was standing there, held his yakisoba plate in one hand as he said to me.

"Hyoudou Issei, as we are both going to the main stage, I guess it's just the beginning. Of course, I am aiming to be the winner."

This man! Even though he was holding a yakisoba plate, he still spoke with such rivalry! As I gulped all my juice down at once, I replied to Vali.

"I aim to be the winner as well! But I have to settle things with you first. If we get matched…I don't think there is going to be any stage like ours."

"Heh, you said it. I want to continue our battle from that time as soon as possible."

The continuation of that time... It must be about the fight we had a year ago when I was still a second year. Since that time, Vali and I haven't been able to settle things. With this guy, this time for sure, we would settle things as fellow Heavenly Dragons...

"Wait, it's not only you who wants to fight against Hyoudou Issei."

Sairaorg stepped in between us as he said that.

"Indeed. I was even made to accompany him stirring the Ocean of Milk. I want to take my revenge on the main stage."

Cao Cao also came! And even Dulio barged in!

"I also want to fight against you one more time in the main stage. And I am sure that with that, the flow of the tournament will be the best."

"Ise-kun, me too. After having come to this point, I also want to fight against you to my heart's content."

Kiba stood beside me as he told me that. If I got matched with Rias's team, then it would be possible for such a thing to happen. Crom Cruach said to me while eating meat as well.

"I want to fight against you and Ddraig head on as well, in order to satisfy myself in this tournament."

[Yeah, there is nothing better than being able to fight you with my own body and flesh.]

Ddraig answered fearlessly as well! There were still many things we didn't know about the manifestation of Ddraig, and I am sure that there must be dangerous aspects.

"If I get matched as well, I also want to try to fight. Against you and Vali, that is."

Even Ikuse-san said those things!

"Ku, I also want to join."

Saji said it frustratingly, but…Sona-senpai said.

“Saji, that means that you just have to train for the next tournament. The life of a Devil is long after all. There is no need to rush.”

Riser looked at me, who was surrounded by a group of men, from afar.

“Nu, so I have to declare it to fight against the Sekiryuutei, huh…”

Somehow, it seemed like he took the situation of this place as a joke… I was surrounded by men! And at that time, there were several people who pulled my arms!

“Ise is going to be taken by men!”

“He is my darling, you know!”

“Ise-san, please talk to us as well!”

Xenovia, Irina and Asia, the Church Trio, pulled me away from the group of men! As I got pulled, I could feel the softness of oppai in my face ‘Boin Boin’!

“Ufufu, so you have returned to my chest, huh, my husband.”

It was Akeno-san! She tried to hug me, but — once again, my arm was pulled as I dived into a pair of well-endowed boobs!

“Ise-kun likes my boobs best, nyan.”

This time it was Kuroka! Shirone-chan a.k.a Koneko-chan who was beside her then pulled my hand!

“Kuroka-oneesama, I also want to celebrate Ise-kun going to the main stage.”

The sisters pulled me back and forth, but — Ravel stepped in as a mediator!

“Shirone! Kuroka-sama! Ise-sama is only one person! We have to share here! Of course, I will also join though!”

While in that situation, the one who hugged me from behind was—.

“Ise-kun iwf my hufband! I won’t hand him over to anyone!”

It was a drunk Rossweisse-sannnn! She must have gotten carried away in the party and ended up drinking alcohol! On my back was Rossweisse-san, both of my hands were taken by Koneko-chan and Kuroka, and even the Church Trio and Akeno-san barged in!

“““““““He is mine!”””””””

Ravel the mediator also said ‘Oh! Please let me in too!’ as she stopped her mediation act!

“…Somehow, I feel jealous.”

“…What should I do to get in there?”

Le Fay and Elmenhilde murmured that as they saw this situation. I was finally sent

flying by the tug of war of the girls as I arrived at a certain pair of oppai. My face was buried into her chest. My vision was then enveloped with a crimson colour. Red — crimson hair more brilliant than strawberry-blonde. Yes, her beautiful long red hair was the same colour as my armour. The place I arrived at as I was sent flying was — my precious person, Rias Gremory. She then smiled sweetly as she gently hugged me.

“Ufufu, as expected, Ise arrived here.”

Rias then said to me.

“Ise, congratulations for qualifying for the main stage.”

“Yeah, thank you. Congratulations to you too.”

As we congratulated each other on making it to the main stage, she boldly said.

“However, even though you are my most beloved person, and a partner who has sworn about the future, a match is a match. If we get matched—”

“I know. Let’s give our best then! That is how the Gremory peerage is after all.”

She laughed in response to my words, looking satisfied.

“As expected of my most beloved person. Ufufu, I love you! I really like you, you know.”

“Me too, Rias. I really love you!”

The guys were also cheering ‘whoo whoo’ as we looked at each other and held each other’s hands saying those words in the middle of the party venue! However, the girls didn’t let that slide off! Asia, Akeno-san, Koneko-chan, Xenovia, Irina, Rossweisse-san and Kuroka then simultaneously said.

[Say ‘I love you’ to me as well!]

“It’s obvious that I love you guyssss! After all, everyone is my bride!”

In the basement of the Hyoudou residence — I shouted my love!

Afterword

As the continuation of Volume twenty-four, I present you here the twenty-fifth volume. Actually, this would be the final volume for High School DxD. What an end. Oh, but it doesn't mean that High School DxD itself will end. I wrote the details on the second half of the afterword, but starting from the next issue, it will be [True High School DxD] starting all over again from Volume 1. This means that the unlabelled DxD that has continued until Volume 25 has ended on a high note.

Although it became something like 'Rossweisse should be on the front cover of Rossweisse's volume!', I was asked 'What would you choose for the end of DxD?', and I answered with jokes like "Rossweisse, of course!". I originally wanted to rejuvenate the numbering after the fourth arc, but as the timing wasn't good, we ended up getting into the final arc. And even though I started this afterword with something rather heavy, I would like to talk about many things as it's the last volume.

Ten years of serialisation have passed.

This year (2018) is the ten year anniversary as it's the tenth year of High School DxD's serialisation. In the serialisation world where going for five years is even considered to be amazing, and not to mention that I was able to continue writing the light novel for ten years, that is all because of the fans and staff. Once again, I would like to say thank you.

If we look back on these ten years, there were a series of challenges and struggles in each arc. While the first arc (Volume 1~2) was the start of the story, I think those two parts themselves are a complete story. The DxD world continued to expand from there as it continued to the second arc, third arc and more. Because this was my first series, I struggled with it. To change into something new…the fourth arc and the last arc were the most difficult (The Red Dragon Emperor's Awakening and the Tournament arc) themes, as I struggled while still continuing to write. Especially the last arc, which was pretty hard to write. The tournament and team battles, inflation expressions and things like that made me rack my brains on each Volume.

And currently, the hardest part is mainly the Gods. First of all, the super strong and major Gods went to the Isolation Barrier Field to fight against Trihexa, and when I researched on major battle-type Gods (other than the Hindu mythology), there were less than I thought there would be (there were many culture types and art types. Also, there were Gods that were similar to those previously mentioned in the story. Although I don't really mind about the villains being similar). And there are also Gods

who don't like a fight that has been predetermined, and in the end, I always got a poor result, and unexpectedly ended up not putting them in even though I wanted to. I was also troubled as there are Gods who are strong, but because they are too minor, what would it be if these Gods fought and trampled the main character with unparalleled strength, and in the end, the tournament turned out this way. Or rather, the more I researched about it, there was something with the Hindu mythology that made me troubled by how should I put them and I couldn't put them. But, I think God Mahabali did something rather bad…

Also, as I put them in, I excluded Gods who might give me something like punishment or cause something bad to me as well. Mainly the connection with the Japanese Gods, that is. I excluded those which would be bad to me if I put them into my writings.

That's why, while there was the circumstance of the story (the protagonists' growth, legends of the monsters, Longinus' setting), I made those other than the Gods who have come out before starting from Sakra and other important Gods withdrew or similar form. I realised that just because this is a tournament arc, it doesn't mean that I can put everything in there.

Every time I add an arc, I felt like I was about to explode myself as I was in dilemma thinking about the story's setting, mythology, and legends. Well, as a result, the growth of the protagonists' side also swung completely though.

And now, to [True High School DxD]

The [True High School DxD] arc that will be starting from the next issue will be the same, the last arc. Then, why did I rejuvenate the numbering? While there were also some grown-up circumstances, my opinion as the writer is because I want to make Ise and Rias act together one more time. While drawing Ise's team in the tournament arc was fun, as expected, I wanted to write about the Gremory peerage of that time + alpha, so I thought of getting a fresh start in True DxD depicting the team at that time and writing about the rest of the tournament.

I wanted to pick up those who ended up in a different team starting from Rias, Akeno and Koneko. One of the factors is also because writing the battle of Rating Games has always been hard for me. If a fight based on rules becomes continuous, the compatibility with this work often goes bad. That's why I think I want to make the missed Ise as the Gremory Peerage (even though, the fact that he is a [King] doesn't change) play an active role. I will be making the surface as the Tournament while the rear side is the story between Ise peerage + Gremory Peerage (+ several people from the members of team [DxD]).

I didn't have any intention of making this unlabelled series super long. I am planning to make the continuation of the Tournament arc the ending. Volumes twenty-two to twenty-five are the preliminary stage arc, while the main stage arc starts from True DxD. I am hoping that the story about the alliance of the rulers of Hell, the remaining Longinus (including the new Longinus), as well as the Gods that I mentioned before can be told, as that would make me happy.

The plan will be longer than the one I mentioned in the afterword of volume twenty-two. Also, the [Twelve Chosen Heavenly Breasts] that appeared this time will also be told.

One more thing, the man that holds [Innovate Clear] and [Telos Karma] that finally appeared this time, Kanzaki Mitsuya, is based on the protagonist of my debut work [Denpachi]. —However, it's not like they are linked, as the Mitsuya in [Denpachi] is a different person. If you think about the Mitsuya in DxD as someone who got there because he was involved in another matter, it will be fine. You won't have any problem if you don't read [Denpachi] first. In the end, it's just the parallel of DxD. Well, I think it's fine if you just think of it like a star system.

Now, my thanks. People who have been along with me until the end of this unlabelled series, Miyama Zero-sama, chief editor T-sama, thank you very much. I am also counting on you with the continuation, [True].

The next volume [True High School DxD] is planned for release around summer.

—And, before that, starting from April this year the new TV anime series [High School DxD HERO] will be broadcast. [HERO] is by the combination of Ise's [H] and [ERO], which holds the meaning of the birth of the Oppai Dragon. The content will be volume nine and ten.

Thank you for going along with [True DxD], [DxD HERO] and [The Fallen Dog God —SLASHDOG—] this year without a break.

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